

AN
OLD SAILOR'S YARN





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“AN
OLD SAILOR’S
YARN.”

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PREFACE

This book is an attempt to describe a state of things that is past or fast passing away. The only merit claimed for it is the merit of truth.

H. CLARKSON BIRCH.

DEDICATION.

To my brother Frank this book is affectionately dedicated.

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CHAPTER I.

Manchester Grammar School—Dockland—Killick & Martin—Naval Architecture—Sailors' Homes—The John C. Munro—Disillusionment—Sad Sailors—the Real Sea—Officers' Manners—A Cockney's Philosophy—Ingenious Reckoning.

It was a proud moment to me when one Sunday evening in the summer of 1874, my Father, having already excited my curiosity and flattered my vanity by proposing that I should stay away from Church to keep him company, asked me how I should like to go to sea.

Visions of being a midshipman and walking the quarter deck, of wearing a uniform and a dirk, flitted across my mind, for I had read all Marryat's Novels and the stories of R. M. Ballantyne, and being but fourteen years old, the glamour of a sea-faring life appealed to my imagination. Alas, I was soon to be disillusioned.

When my Mother and the family returned, my Father gravely announced that my future career had been decided upon.

As he was in a very good position and enjoyed a comfortable income, what his reason was for taking me from school and

shipping me off to sea at that tender age has always been a mystery to me, but he had somewhat peculiar ideas regarding children, ideas which were more common then than perhaps they are now, when young people were supposed to have a double dose of original sin, and their healthy outbursts of spirits and ebullitions of energy, when they interfered with the comforts of their seniors, were looked upon as direct manifestations of the evil one. I think, to a great extent, all that is now changed and parenthood is no longer considered synonymous with saintship and a mutual duty is recognised as between parent and child.

Though we lived at Blackpool in Lancashire, I went with my two brothers to the Manchester Grammar School where we boarded with a Clergyman, who in addition to keeping a school boarding house, occupied the position of Secretary to the Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews. The Secretaryship was worth three hundred a year, and I used to wonder vaguely what he did to earn it, for beyond receiving some hundredweights of tracts every year, presumably for distribution,

which were used for lighting fires with, he seemed to have no other duties connected with the position.

The Head Master of the Grammar School then was a huge man with a deep voice and a ferocious black beard. His voice, his beard and appearance generally used to strike terror into us boys, and I have known a small boy faint when spoken to by him.

He was supposed to be an ideal Head Master and a clever man, and afterwards became head of St. Paul's, London, and on his death the Daily Mail had an eulogistic article on him under the title of "A Great Head Master."

To me he seemed the very impersonification of the fiend himself, and though of course in London he was forced to pursue a different system, I cannot believe the rule of terrorism he employed in Manchester was a good one. He had but one idea of teaching boys and that was by a free application of the stick. He seemed to take a positive delight in flogging small boys, and every undermaster, of whom there were about twenty, had free power to use the cane. And that power was fearfully abused. It

was the custom of one horrid little French Master to unmercifully thrash every new boy directly he appeared in his class, by way of intimidating him, I suppose.

A knowledge of Greek and Latin then was supposed to be the only knowledge worth acquiring, and though out of about 700 boys there was a class of about twenty called the "Science Sixth," they were contemptuously named the "Bottle Washers." The idea, I believe, still prevails, that the education most to be desired is what is known as the classical education, and most boys still spend valuable years of their lives grinding away at Greek hexameters and composing Latin verses, whatever they may be. When in after years I asked my brother, a school master and a graduate of Oxford, why so much labour was expended in acquiring at the best but an imperfect proficiency in languages long since dead, he replied that one must teach something, and that modern languages could be picked up in a few months' travel on the Continent, and that no one could speak their own language correctly and yet remain ignorant of the roots from which it was derived, an

assertion which I by no means admit.

For my part, I never could make any progress in the dead languages, and was pronounced by the Head Master "worthless" in consequence, much as the workhouse guardians said "Oliver Twist would live to be hanged because he asked for more porridge." Unfortunately, I overheard this sentence pronounced and repeated it, and it finally reached the head of the family. Hence my Father's reason for proposing that I should go to sea.

After some discussion it was decided by the powers that were that I should sail in one of Killick & Martin's ships, a firm with offices in George Yard, Lombard Street, who owned and supervised about a dozen China Clippers and in due course I was brought to London to join a barque called the "John C. Munro" then loading coal in the East India Docks, bound to Anjer for orders.

I am not one of those which extol the past at the expense of the present, but when I visit the London Docks now I have some sympathy with the philosophy of Ruskin, who, I believe, cast some doubts on the

advantages of progress. In those days the docks as far down as Blackwall were packed with sailing vessels, and their lofty towering masts and graceful spars, tapering to the tiny royal yard surmounted by the pole with the house flag flying made an imposing sight, and with a cheerful "yo heave hoing" of the riggers, and the forms of the busy dockers hoisting and rolling the merchandise ashore, presented a most animated and cheerful spectacle, and the odours of the East, the smells of the sugar and the spices, altogether tended to make dockland a most enchanting neighbourhood. Now all is changed, gone are the beautiful clippers, gone the masts and spars, even the sailors and the bronzed and bearded shipmaster have disappeared, and in their place are a few rusty hulks manned, for the most part, by Lascars and commanded by a smooth-shaven dapper man who apparently endeavours to ape the naval type.

Before the ship sailed I was allowed to go to "German Reids," and that combination of instruction and amusement, the old Polytechnic in Regent Street.

In those days, the majority of middle

class people objected to the theatre on moral ground and German Reids was a distinct attempt at a compromise. I think the entertainment would now be considered mild even by boys of fourteen. At the Polytechnic I sat on a kind of mantelpiece, and watched some sort of dissolving views, saw glass spun round into a kind of hair-like substance and inspected the diving-bell. I was then taken to the office to interview the owners. Killick himself was a tall, fierce-looking man, the type of an old skipper, whilst Martin was obese and oily, the third partner was gaunt and thin, whilst a fourth man, probably a head clerk, completed the quartette. They all appeared to me to be hideously ugly and I was forcibly reminded of some verses in scripture where it says, "That round about and on either side of him were four great beasts." Whilst the other three looked at me as if I was a curious exhibit in a museum, Killick did the talking and dosed me with platitudes in that superior style which most men seem to affect when speaking to the rising generation. He was a blunt, plain-spoken man, and on that account was considered by my people to

be what is known as "a rough diamond," and a man of sterling honesty. For my part, the reputation these rough diamonds obtain is, I am inclined to think, generally an undeserved one, as if, forsooth, a person who was inconsiderate of the feelings of others in small matters would have more consideration for them in large ones. Shakespeare hits the type off well, when in the tragedy of "King Lear," "Cornwall" failing to get a civil answer out of Kent says,

"This is some fellow

Who, having been praised for bluntness,
doth effect

A saucy roughness, and constrains the
garb

Quite from his nature. He cannot flatter
he

An honest mind and plain, he must speak
truth

And they will take it so; if not he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in
their plainness

Harbour more craft and more corrupter
ends

Than twenty silly ducking observans,
That stretch their duties nicely."

Certainly, I never saw much of the rough diamond about Captain Killick, for I served him faithfully for five years, most of

the time doing a man's work for a boy's pay, and at the end of that time, when I passed for second mate, he declined to give me a ship.

The Suez Canal had then been opened some half dozen years but steam, though it was encroaching upon, had not altogether captured the China trade. The clippers still ran though they had ceased to race and nine-tenths of the sea-borne trade of the world was done by sailing ships. Indeed, there was then lying in East India Docks, Green's Old "Renown," a type of East Indiaman with high stern and quarter galleries, not very unlike the "Great Harry" of the time of Henry VIII.

One can realise how very slow progress was in shipbuilding up to the time of the Victorian era by looking at the models of the different types of ships that were evolved through the centuries. It was the custom up to the beginning of the nineteenth century to build them wedge shaped with a blunt stern and a sharp bow. I suppose it did not occur to anybody to look at a fish and notice how the tail tapers off, indeed, they seemed more fitted for drifting than sailing, and they

must have found it quite impossible to beat to windward, but I suppose they didn't try for we read how Dutch "William" was detained months in Holland waiting for fair wind to blow him across to these shores.

The names of the ships yards too are instructive. Notwithstanding there are two and sometimes three yards above it, the yard above the mainyard is called the topsail yard. Up till the sixteenth century the mast had but one yard, until some genius hit upon the idea of putting another above it and called it the topsail yard. Then someone else didn't see why he couldn't put another above that so he did and called it a top gallant yard, which in time was capped by another one called significantly a "royal."

Ships then carried studding sails which are sails stretched in fine weather on temporary booms outside the main and topsail yards, these, though now extinct, date from Tudor times and one can imagine an Elizabethan gallant with ruff and rapier coming on deck some fine morning and exclaiming "By'r Lady, but she is now studded with sail." The exclamation he

would use is still in vogue on sea and on shore too, but it has been corrupted and diverted from its original meaning and may now be freely translated "sanguinaire."

These were the palmy days of Poplar when Green still built ships in the neighbourhood, and there was always a big demand for shipwrights, riggers, lumpers, dockers, and everybody in any way connected with the shipping industry, to say nothing of hundreds of deep water sailors being paid off weekly, who formed a golden harvest for perhaps a less reputable class of workers, and crimps and boarding house masters did a thriving trade. For though there was and still is, I believe, a large building in Well Street, named or rather mis-named "a sailor's home" where men could at least be sure of fairly honest treatment, yet it was a cold, comfortless place a huge caravan-sari, and tho' I have stayed in several of them, I never could see any advantage they possessed over an ordinary sailors' boarding house.

I have been able to get far better board and lodgings for the same money in a private house where there has been no other

boarder than myself, so one may imagine that so called sailors' homes must pay a large dividend when one comes to think that four or five hundred men stay there at a time. Of course, there is no reason why as sailors' boarding houses they should not pay well, but because they do not actually rob with violence they pose as sort of philanthropic institutions, and I believe the public, or that small section of the public which interests itself in such matters, look upon them as such. But why should they plaster up religious tracts all over the place, and glazed shiny warning upon the future that is likely to overtake drunkards as if a fondness for alcohol and kindred vices were peculiar to sea-faring men. Richard Green, the shipowner, I believe, was the first to build or found a sailors' home, it is now, or was then, used as a shipping office, but still bears the name of Green's Home.

This same Richard Green must have been a philanthropist as well as a shipowner, for at his death a statue was erected to him, which still adorns the East India Dock Road, and I remember the refrain of a song that

used to be sung eulogizing his virtues. The song was very popular at that time at the convivial gatherings of working men, but unfortunately I only remember the first two lines, which ran thus

“ Dickie Green, the shipowner, has gone
to his rest,

The prayers of the poor they go with him.”

I expect it is pretty well forgotten now. I understand there exists a society for the recovery of old English songs, perhaps they might rescue it from oblivion.

The John C. Munro was an iron barque of six hundred tons, which carried eight hands before the mast, with 4 boys who lived in the half deck with the carpenter, she also carried a cook, cabin boy, master and two mates. Of the boys, I was the only first voyager and I received the magnificent sum of a shilling a month. When I asked why such a nominal sum was allotted me, I was told that there were no slaves in England, a distinction, in my opinion, with very little difference.

The master or Captain was a young, dark man, born, I understood, in Singapore. Though my Father had been to see him and endeavoured to enlist his interests in

me, I cannot say I consider myself very much beholden to him for he scarcely took any notice of me during the two years I sailed under him. The first mate was a sea-dog of the old school, a middle aged man with bow legs, a foul mouth and a fondness for whisky, whilst the second mate was a youngman, who afterwards I heard being found guilty of manslaughter for killing a boy, got seven years' imprisonment. As the ships were being warped out of the dock and I was standing on the poop in a half dazed condition, he came up to me and said "Well, what the hell are you standing there for like a half pay officer, get hold of that rope and give them a pull." This was not exactly the sort of thing that I had expected, but I did as I was told without endeavouring to argue the point with him. Nor did I see much romance in the sea when next morning at 4 o'clock I was turned out of my bunk, a rusty chain hook was put into my hand, and I set to hauling back filthy chain cables from the windlass whilst the men hove up the anchor.

Captain Killick had said that I should have a lot of spare time on my hands but I

found my hours were fully occupied. I was put in the first mate's watch, and as I had to spend twelve hours on deck day and night, all the time for eating, sleeping and recreation had to come out of the other twelve.

As I took no wheel or look-out I had to strike the ship's bell every half hour all through my watch on deck at night, a wholly unnecessary duty which I might have been spared, for in fine weather the men and the other boys could sleep about the deck at night during their watch when the wind was steady, moreover, being the youngest boy in the ship, I had to act as sort of flunkey to the carpenter, an old Dutchman who used to abuse me and say in his imperfect English "You aristoggerly are no use coming to sea, except to bother honest men trying to make a living." The other boy in my watch was named Serrol, who had been three voyages at sea and thought himself quite an ancient mariner. He evidently considered providence had been specially working in his behalf when it gave him a first voyage to tyrannize over. I rebelled once, but a delicate lad of fourteen has no chance against a burly brute of twenty,

and the fight ended in my discomforture, unfortunately such things do happen in real life, poetical justice and the triumph of right over wrong being almost exclusively confined to the world of fiction. I used to vow that when I grew up I would take it out of him, and years afterwards I came across him when he was a pilot at Port Said, but all I did was to present him with a box of Indian cigars. On account of my name I was called "Broom," and because of my somewhat superior breeding the title "Lord" was prefixed to it, and I was "Lord Broom" for the whole of the voyage. The captain used to call me a "soldier," a term of contempt at sea. I have sailed with a good many ship masters and with few exceptions found them inconsiderate selfish, and tyrannical. Few men can stand unlimited power and in a sailing ship the captain is a despot. The officers are entirely dependent on him for their future promotion, for his word at the end of the voyage can make or mar them. People may talk about benevolent despots, but how many have there been in the world. Hadrian, Trajan, Antonius Pius, and Marcus Aurelius. As we

read history, most of the rest seem to have found more satisfaction in oppression than in benevolence, seem to have preferred hate to love and to have used their power more to promote evil than good.

We had a crew of English with a couple of West Indian niggers and a little Cockney cook who was quite a character in his way he was a great talker and fond of laying down the law on any subject, and being himself quite unable to read or write, his favourite saying was "It's hall their hignorance, it's hall their hignorance."

These were the days when Plimsoll was at the height of his fame, I had always been given to understand that sea-faring men fairly worshipped him, and I remember questioning the sailors as to their opinion of him, and was quite shocked to find that none of them had even heard of his name.

I wonder why the term merry is always applied to sailors, no body of men deserve it less for sea-faring people are most practical minded folk. I think it must have originated in times gone by when men of war used to make long cruises and the men used to be paid off with comparatively large sums of

money, and having lived for perhaps two or three years under a stern repressive discipline removed entirely from all society, they naturally had a carouse when they came ashore. Although naval vessels are now constantly in and out of port and the men have plenty of shore leave, and there is no excuse for that sort of thing, the tradition if still maintained and it seems a sort of point of honour with a "man of warsman" to make a fool of himself directly he comes ashore. Certainly I did not see any great excess of mirth on board the John C. Munro, though I have been in ships that were considerably livelier. I was soon initiated into the mysteries of making sinnet, which is platting rope yarns together to form chaffing gear, and was very soon able to go aloft and furl a royal, this job always being allotted to the youngest boy in the ship.

I do not think there is any finer sight than a full-rigged ship with all her canvas spread, and when in a strong following breeze as one gazes from aloft and watches the narrow hull plunging through the waters the sight is truly entrancing. Much has been written about the sunrise at sea, but it

does not equal the sunrise on shore, one misses the songs of birds and the general awakening of nature; the most mysterious and witching time at sea is just as dawn is breaking, there is a wierd mystery about it, and one realizes in some small measure the vastness of the universe and the littleness of man.

Sunrise generally takes place in what is known as the gray eze watch from 4 to 8 a.m., 4 a.m. being the time when one is sleepest and finds it hardest to turn out. It is also the signal for what is called "turning to," or commencing the day's work with washing the decks down, then the ordinary monotonous sea day begins, and lasts till 5-30 when the decks are cleared up for the night.

Many books have written about the sea, but the best, because the truest, is Dana's "Two Years before the Mast," where it describes it as it really is. Off the Cape of Good Hope we got very dirty weather, and the ship being much overloaded, shipped enormous quantities of water, added to that it was bitterly cold and impossible to keep the half deck dry, and I having naturally

the lowest and worst bunk, found that whenever I stretched myself out when turning in my feet encountered ice cold water, so that I had to sleep with my knees up to my head coiled up in a sort of overhand knot, but R. M. Ballantyne and other writers forgot to mention that sort of thing in their stories. As, however, we got into higher latitudes, the weather improved till we made the Straits of Sunda, where at 'Anjer Point' our orders awaited us and we found that we were bound for Hong Kong. Here the ship was thronged with Malays in various sorts of dress and undress, one had a top hat and a shirt on and nothing else, whilst another had a woman's skirt surmounted by a naval officer's coat. They were all very ugly and to my eyes scarcely distinguishable from the monkeys they brought aboard for sale. Every skipper that ever I sailed with always seemed to take a delight in sharpening his wit on them, and when, wishing to know before they came aboard, they said in their imperfect English, "Bite, the dog," the skipper found it necessary to reply "Certainly not, whatever do you want to bite the dog for," whereupon, of course,

everybody within hearing laughed, as everybody laughs in the courts of justice when the judge makes a joke.

However, they had plenty of bananas and cocoanuts for sale, and though the sailors had long since got out of me the few shillings I had with me, I soon found that flannel shirts, or Crimean shirts as they are called at sea, were a marketable commodity. I also for the first time made the acquaintance with a fruit called the mangustine, somewhat like a small orange but much more delicious. "Tom Moore" mentions the fruit in one of his poems, and calls it the most delicious fruit in the world, and for my part I can thoroughly endorse his opinion, only how he ever managed to taste one in those days is more than I can understand, for even now they are comparatively unknown.

As we sailed slowly through the Straits a pilot put off with the intention of offering his services. The captain went below and delegated to the mate the duty of declining, who on the pilot boarding the ship and civilly saying "Do you want a pilot, Sir?" replied "No, we don't want any bloody pilot." I often wonder what sort of opinion

foreigners must have of English manners, when the message that the dignified Spaniard of courtly Indian Babu brings on board is received with a curse. Certainly the manners of ships' masters and ships' officers have not changed much since Fielding sketched the type in his narrative of "A Voyage to Lisbon," in the middle of the eighteenth century.

We arrived in Hong Kong after a passage of 120 days from London, and were taken in and moored by a Chinese pilot, and I could not help admiring the skill with which he handled the ship. I have mixed with Chinamen in all parts of the world, and in my opinion they are the cleverest race in it. I have heard the story that in days gone by, as an example of superiority in the mechanical art, we solemnly presented to the Chinese Government a small cambric needle, and they returned it with another perfect needle in the eye of it. I don't know whether the story is true or not but I never knew anything that a Caucasian could do that a Chinaman could not do as well or better if he cared to. Nor as far as I can see are they one whit behind us in ethical attributes, the only

difference is that their vices are not our vices, and their virtues not our virtues.

In port the ship's routine is changed, no watch is kept and all the hands with the exception of one night watchman, sleep in at night and work from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. It is the custom in a foreign port to give the men twenty four hours' liberty and a month's pay, and they generally return to the ship the following morning in various stages of delapidation. One little Cockney we had came aboard in a shocking state, covered in mud, his clothes in rags, both eyes black and a great gash in his lip, and on the mate asking him what on earth he had been doing to get into that state, he made the startling reply "Well, it is a poor heart that never rejoices."

But after all what is a sailor to do when he goes ashore in a foreign port, one can scarcely expect an altogether illiterate man to take his pleasure in a free library, to admire the scenery, or observe with interest the peculiarities of the people in the country where he happens to be. Neither is any house open to him but a public house, and though sailors' rests and temperance reading

rooms have been provided in some places, they don't seem to be much patronised, there appears to be an air of coldness and propriety about them which seems to repel. There are in the little villages and towns in California, reading rooms provided with benches and old magazines for the benefit of the grape pickers, ranch hands and harvest crews. I have tried them myself when waiting round for employment, but though by no means addicted to alcohol, I always prefer the hospitality of the saloon, and the bartenders cheery welcome, purchased cheaply for the price of a glass of lager beer.

The parson with whom I lived in Manchester had given me a card of introduction to a former pupil of his, a certain Mr. Baines, who was then a parson in Hong Kong, but I never presented it, until one day he happened to come aboard to hold service, and I was called out of the hold to attend in the focastle. I came up smothered with mud, having been engaged in cleaning out the limbers, and I must have looked a somewhat startling object, for he seemed considerably surprised when I handed him the introduction. However, he expressed

himself very pleased and gratified, and disappointed that I had not presented it before. The reverend gentleman, however, contented himself with asking me to dinner when we returned from Whampoa, where we were going in a few days to load, but as no ship stayed more than twenty-four hours in Hong Kong when loaded, I need scarcely say that I never put my legs under his mahogany.

My Father had given the captain £10 for me, but five dollars about 22/-, was all that I ever saw of it. He had the most original and ingenious way of making out my account. He paid 4/- for the dollar and charged 5/6 for it, and when I had taken out some 10 dollars in the bumboat, he called me aft, showed me a complicated sort of bill, ran the items down hurriedly, yet ending up with the words, clearly pronounced, "And that makes £10, sign it please."

I signed it. Had it been my death warrant I think I should have been too scared to refuse, and curiously enough from that date my circumstances improved, everybody, of course, taking their cue from the captain. I was treated better, and on

the passage home had comparatively quite a rosy time of it.

We loaded tea in Whampoa, which is a cluster of small huts alongside a dirty river, a typical Chinese town, and sailed for London, where we arrived after a passage of 138 days.

CHAPTER II.

Eccentric Skippers—Predictions Justified—Philosophy of Courage—Chanties—Sailors' Food—Manilla—In Hospital—Irresponsible Medicos—A Sailor Poet—Boston—A Sad Accident—Japan then and now—Lawless New York.

The returning to shore was, I found, nearly as disappointing and disillusioning as the first going to sea. To my surprise I was not looked upon as a sort of hero, and I was quite willing to admit the truth of the old Hebrew proverb, "that a prophet is not without honour except amongst his own people and his own kindred." The sea sayings and nautical phraseology that I affected fell flat, and I think all my people were rather pleased when I, after about six weeks ashore, Killick sent for me to join the *Wylo*, a very fine, full rigged, composite built ship, that is a wodden ship in an iron frame. In such a ship as the *Wylo*, *Lothair*, *Sir Launcelot*, *Ariel*, *Cutty Sark* and other clippers, the art of building sailing ships had attained its perfection, they were models of grace and beauty, and under favourable conditions could easily

cover three hundred and fifty miles in twenty-four hours, but they are now as extinct as the Dodo, run off the seas by the competition of cheap built, foreign manned steamers.

The sailing ship still exists, but she has changed her character, a huge four-masted iron tank is the only sort that seems to pay any dividends, and the only trade left to them is the San Francisco and West Coast grain trade, and when the Panama Canal opens they will be deprived even of that. And yet the other day in Ipswich, I went aboard a brig, rope rigged throughout, with not a bit of wire and scarce a bit of iron aboard her, a style of vessel in which one of Nelson's people would have been thoroughly at home; it shows how in mechanical evolution as well as in natural or organic the different types survive and overlap.

The Captain of the Wylo possessed the not uncommon name of 'Brown,' whilst the name of the chief mate, or mate as he is familiarly termed on board, was Robinson. It's a pity that the second mate was not named Jones, but he was a Jersey man and

was called 'Langlois.'

We sailed from London on a Good Friday, surely an unlucky day, yet nobody seemed to feel any misgivings on that score, nor do I suppose that there were two men on board the ship who had the least idea what Good Friday commemorated.

I wonder how the idea got abroad that sailors objected to go to sea on Friday, I used to be given to understand that it was impossible to get a ship to sea on Friday, and even now the idea is still prevalent. Many a time I have asked old sailors if they disliked going to sea on that day, or if they have ever known anybody else who objected to it, and the answer has always been in the negative, yet the idea was then and I think still is deep-rooted in the minds of landsmen and untravelled people generally.

The Captain was a bachelor, a better educated man than the majority of ship-masters and a man approaching forty. He was well read, too, in the current literature of the day, and was one of the kindest and most benevolent skippers that I ever sailed under. He was a bit of an eccentric, and there was a legend that he had been crossed

in love, as he had a heart with an arrow through it tattooed on his left breast.

Marryat's eccentric skipper was but very little overdrawn, I have sailed under some odditiēs myself that very nearly approached him.

The lonely isolated life they lead has a tendency to accentuate any peculiarity they possess : they are as a rule illiterate men, but of passing intelligence, and they frequently take to reading standard educational works, with the result that they become pedantic in the extreme.

I remember Brown, on overhearing the officers discussing the probable length of the ship's passage, saying, "I am afraid your idiosyncrasies tend towards atmospherical architecture ;" whilst the captain of the Prince Rupert, a little barque of which I was mate, had a positive mania for the Greek word "Kudos" and used frequently to speak of such a man's youthful "indiscrepancies" instead of youthful indiscretions.

I used to look forward to taking the wheel from 8 to 10 p.m. in the first watch of the night, for then I could hear the skipper talking to the mate.

Just about this time some books had been written, in verse I think, attacking the Queen, who was then somewhat unpopular. One I think was called "The coming K," one, the "Siliad," and one, "Jon Duan," but the latter, I believe, was an attack on English society in general and the night life of London in particular. When in time they gravitated to the half deck for the carpenter's perusal I got hold of them. Also he used to talk of a book which made some stir at the time called "Jink's Baby." Having heard so much of the book, when I got ashore I bought it and found it was an attack, a very witty attack, on the Education Act of 1870.

He did not think much of me as a sailor and used to prophecy that I should never do any good for myself, by which I suppose he meant that I should never attain to any eminence in my profession, or never amass any great amount of money, and if these lines should ever meet his eye, for I understand he is still hale and hearty, he will be pleased to know that his prediction has been justified by results, for I never have. All men who prophesy evil, end in wishing it,

like Jonah who railed against the Almighty because 'Nineveh' was not destroyed after he had predicted the catastrophe.

No, it has always been my lot to pay for the other man's dinner, I was born lacking the gift of acquisitiveness, and have always found it easier to disperse than to collect. My role has always been that of lamb to someone else's lion, to be what the Americans call a "sucker," that is, a man who is easily cheated out of his money by any plausible rogue who likes to approach him.

But "que voulez vous" we cannot all be rich, successful men, or there would be no one to do the dirty work, somebody must make the cake before anybody else can eat it.

It's just according to the nature a man is born with. I remember at school a boy who used to save up the money that he returned with at the beginning of the term or half as it was then called, and when the other boys had spent theirs, he used to lend it out, and gather in his interest in a way that would have rejoiced the heart of any semetic moneylender, he always won, too, at games of chance, and though he was

despised by boys and masters alike, he cared nothing, for he always came out ahead.

I never followed his career, but if he is living now I have no doubt whatever that he is a millionaire, and I wish his riches may bring joy to the heart of this believer in the philosophy of the man with muck rake.

This was a larger ship than the John C. Munro, and there were four of us boys in the half deck besides the carpenter, sailmaker and bo'sun.

The carpenter was a man of superior education, and had sailed with Brown for seven years ; he was a fine typical Scotchman, tall with classic features, bold and determined, and everybody in the ship from the mate downwards was a little afraid of him. I have often noticed how one determined man can dominate a whole crowd. They say man is a fighting animal, it's true he is a quarrelling animal, but my experience is that very few men have got much fight in them.

It's true that when trained, disciplined, and led, or rather ordered, they can be made to kill each other, but I think the more they are civilized the less courage they have.

Once I was in a steamer which carried

several regiments of warriors, returning victorious from one of these wars that are constantly waged by the South American republics, they appeared to be as low and primitive a type as could be found, a mixture of nigger and Indian, and amongst them were boys of 14 with a rifle as big as themselves, with gaping gun shot wounds which seemed to cause them no inconvenience, and their officers told me that in action they did not seem to know the meaning of fear, yet I notice that there was a good deal of surrendering in the Boer War, and if history speaks truth, that is not the way our soldiers used to behave in days gone by. This same carpenter used to cast my horoscope and say that he would see me some day going down the East India Dock Road to join my ship as an A.B., it was fortunate the poor fellow could not cast his own, for he died mad a few years afterwards.

We had a chequer crew, that is, half negroes and half white men; some of the negroes were very musical, with fine voices, and we had some very good chanty men amongst them.

The chanty is a song sung when heaving

up the anchor or pulling on a rope; they say a good chanty is as good as ten men and I'm not sure that it is not.

The first line is sung by the chanty man, and the rest join in the chorus giving a simultaneous pull or tug altogether.

When hoisting a topsail yard off the Horn, taken with the surroundings of the rolling sea and grey sky, they have a wierd plaintive, almost pathetic sound.

A common one for hoisting runs thus—

“ Oh, they call me hanging Johnny,
 (Chorus) Away, away,
 They call me hanging Johnny,
 (Chorus) Oh, hang boys, hang.”

Another one, and a very old one, records the misfortunes of a certain “ Reuben Ranson.”

“ Oh, poor old Reuben Ranson,
 (Chorus) Ranson, boys, Ranson,
 Oh, Reuben was no sailor,
 (Chorus) Ranson, boys, Ranson,
 He shipped on board of a whaler,
 (Chorus) Ranson, boys, Ranson.”

And so it goes on detailing his various misfortunes till the yard is mast headed or the mate sings out belay.

A favourite anchor song is the old federal song, sung by General Sherman's soldiers

when marching through the State of Georgia towards the end of the American Civil War in 1865.

It is one of the best marching songs I ever heard, and it lends itself equally to the windlass, it runs thus—

“ Sound the glorious bugle, boys, sound it
as before,

Sound it as we used to do in the good old
days of yore,

Sound it as we did that day when fifty
thousand strong,

We all went marching through Georgia.

Chorus—

Hurrah, hurrah, we'll sound the jubilee,
Hurrah, hurrah, for the flag that sets us free.
And so we'll sing the chorus from the land
unto the sea,

Whilst we went marching through Georgia.

And so it goes on for several more verses but it is too well known, in the States at any rate, to need transcribing in full, but I never knew it was sung in England until the other day I heard it sung at a village concert, the Parson gravely announcing it as a Confederate song. I need scarcely say the Confederates were the other side. Sometimes Jack waxes ironical in verse, and one song calls attention to the contrast between the way a homeward bound sailor is treated

and the scant courtesy shown to an outward-bounder. A man who has just been paid off and has plenty of money is known as a homewardbounder, whilst a man who has already spent his money is said to be outward bound.

“ Oh, now my boys, we are homeward bound,
(Chorus) Good-bye, fare you well,

Oh, now, my boys, we are homeward bound,
(Chorus) Hurrah, my boys, we are homeward bound,

The old Black Horse we all go in

(Chorus) Good-bye, etc.,

And shout for brandy and for gin,

(Chorus) Hurrah, my boys, we are homeward bound.

Then up comes Jenkins with a smile,
Chorus.

Says John, come up, its worth your while,
Chorus.

But when the money is done and spent,
Chorus.

There's none to be borrowed and none to
be lent,
Chorus.

Then up comes Jenkins with a frown,
Chorus.

Says—Jack get up, let John lie down,
For you are outward bound, you are outward
bound.

The Black Horse was a famous hostelry on Tower Hill, near the discharging office, and Jenkins was for many years the landlord,

the moral the song conveys might equally be applied to a higher strata of society.

We had a first voyager on board named Watson, an English boy born in Geneva, who for the first two weeks suffered from sea-sickness, and on recovery, of course, he developed an enormous appetite. The carpenter said to him one dinnertime, "Well, Genevra, is your appetite coming back?"

"Yes," said Watson, "It's beginning to come back." This produced a burst of laughter from the rest of us, and the carpenter said, "Only beginning, then the Lord help us when it comes back altogether."

The point of the joke is obvious to anyone who has sailed on a merchant ship, and knows that there is only a certain and somewhat scanty allowance of rations allotted to each man. Indeed, the food in a sailing ship was, and I believe still is abominable.

Salt pork and pea soup one day, salt beef and duff the next, the duff means $1\frac{1}{2}$ of flour per head a week, half a pound made into a sort of heavy pudding and served out on alternate days. The pea soup, however, which is dried split peas, with pork boiled in it

is excellent and that is, I think, the most life sustaining dish on the somewhat meagre menu.

Hard biscuits or pantiles we could have "ad libitum," but if they were at all damp they swarmed with maggots, and if kept dry were alive with weavils. Yet bad as the food is somehow we managed to thrive on it, and though sailors suffer considerably from boils there is very little sickness aboard a ship, unless, indeed, it happens to be a passenger ship where a doctor is carried. A medicine chest is put aboard but there is only one remedy for all illnesses aboard ship and that is a dose of salts, although I have seen a captain with a taste for scientific experiments mixing every drug in the medicine chest together and give it to a sailor who complained of feeling seedy, and said he could not enjoy his pipe.

As he went forward with a sample of everything the medicine chest contained inside him, the skipper said, "I wonder if that will enable him to enjoy his pipe."

Running through the S. E. trades I was witness of a most remarkable accident, and an almost miraculous escape. The

third mate, a young man named Syder, was engaged on some work on the mizzen top gallant yard when by some means or other he managed to overbalance himself and fell to the deck, a distance of over 100 feet. He fell first on the lower rigging breaking two ratlines, then cannoned off the boat's gunwale, which happened to be in the davits, striking the deck head first. Yet he was practically unhurt, and after a few days in his bunk was able to resume his duties. The next morning the captain, who was very particular about his decks, had the carpenter on the poop, with hose water and a hammer smoothing out the dent that his head had made in the soft pine. Speaking of the trades I think their constancy has been much over-rated, I noticed that sometimes we got a S. E. wind in the latitude where the S. E. trades ought to be and sometimes we did'nt. I have heard old sailors and old shipmasters, too, declare that the trades are not what they used to be, but that is an old yarn, for I once picked up a back number of "Notes and Queries," dating from the early sixties and there I read a letter from an old skipper who said that neither the N. E. nor the S. E. trades

were as steady and constant as they were when he first went to sea at the beginning of the 19th century. However, it does not matter now as steam has rendered us quite independent of them.

We arrived at Shanghai after a passage of 125 days, but I will not attempt to describe the place as it is too accessible and well known in these days to need it; but I witnessed the opening of the first railway in China, from Woosung to Shanghai, a distance I believe of something like 30 miles. It was a concession to modern ideas and western progress, but it was afterwards taken up on the complaint of the boatmen who said it deprived them of their livelihood. I understand all that is altered now and China is being rapidly westernised, and that Chinamen are even discarding the pigtail, which was then held to be sacred.

It used to amuse me to see a batch of prisoners being taken to jail tied together by their tails, and I was forcibly reminded of the poet's words—

“It moveth altogether if it move at all.”

From Shanghai we sailed in ballast for Manila, in the Phillipine Islands, since, of

course, taken over by the Americans. Manila in those days presented a picturesque survival of the old Spanish régime. It possessed a magnificent cathedral and seemed to be ruled almost entirely by the ecclesiastical authorities.

The whole of the foreign trade was in the hands of the English, American and German merchants who did'nt seem either socially or in business to mingle with the Spanish element.

I witnessed a magnificent religious procession, and in the evening stood with a large crowd under a balcony, where a band was serenading two fat priests, who were smoking big cigars, and who at intervals threw small pieces of paper down which were eagerly scrambled for by the crowd. I presume they were some sort of blessing or benediction or were believed to possess some sort of magical quality or other. The natives seemed poor, but no poorer or more degraded than other aborigines I have seen under English or American rule. Whilst lying there I had an unpleasant and painful experience, for I came ashore for a day's liberty with another boy about my own

age, and tumbled into the "cumash" as the artificial creek was called, and we both slept all night in the boat, I in my dripping wet clothes, with the natural result that we were both laid up with fever, malarial fever being very prevalent in the place. There was a port authority doctor who used to visit the ship, and he sent for us to come aft so that he might inspect us, for on board a ship the doctor does not visit the patient, the patient has to come aft and see the doctor.

When I told him I had fallen into the "cumash" he said at once, "Was you drunk?" The question was perhaps natural but for a professional man the grammar was faulty.

However, for some reason or other, probably because it was something into his pocket, he ordered us both ashore to hospital.

I have a good constitution and if he had left me alone I should probably have got well in a few days, but the Hospital nearly killed me.

Never shall I forget going into that ward, the sailor's ward, in which were about a dozen sailors of various nationalities, most

of them suffering from syphilis in its most repulsive form, and to add to the depressing effect there was a huge life-size picture of the crucifixion over the entrance. Though there was a sort of native underling or assistant, and a sweet little Spanish sister, we were entirely in charge of the ship doctor, an Irish adventurer of the lowest type.

No doubt he is long since deceased, and I hope they'll have more mercy on him in the next world than he had on me in that hospital. The native assistant used to put a horrible smelling bandage on my forehead and in order to escape it to a certain extent I used to push it further up my head, so out of spite he put a caustic plaster on me, of which I carry the mark to this day, and for four days and nights I writhed in agony. When the pain subsided I probably looked worse than I was, for I don't suppose there was much the matter with me but weakness, the result of pain and fever, for one morning about 3 a.m. the sister read the prayers for the dying at my bedside. It is true they were in the Spanish language, but I knew sufficient of Latin to catch their import.

The captain was kind and frequently came to see us, but when another boy had to come ashore and have half a toe taken off he lost patience and said he "hoped soon to have the pleasure of burying some of us." Hospitals are no doubt most excellent institutions, but for my part I think I would sooner die in a ditch than in a hospital.

As for the Irish doctor he ought to have been severely punished for mal practice, but to him I was merely a ship's boy, and he didn't care what I suffered, or whether I lived or died, he was paid a certain sum per annum as a port doctor, so he took no interest in the patients.

My experience has been that unless one pays the doctor himself, he gets but short shrift, a doctor is wholly irresponsible, no one ever seems to be able to call him to account, and I only hope that the panel patients under the new Insurance Act will be treated with more consideration. Once when serving in Harrisons Line, as I could speak Hindustani I was told off to take five lascar sailors to see the doctor at Gravesend. After waiting with my charges in the bitter East wind and drizzling rain, somebody

appeared sprinting along the street, I thought at first it was the leader in a walking race, but it proved to be the Doctor. He unlocked the office and I ranged the patients in a row. I had to translate the men's remarks and tell him as best I could what they were suffering from; he transacted the business and prescribed for them in exactly four minutes, then locked up the surgery and sprinted away again.

However I was able to join the ship before she sailed, and very glad I was to get away from that hospital.

I have mentioned chanties; there was a French ship lying near and they hove up the anchor to the old song "Marlborough gone to the War," that was so popular in Europe in the 18th century. We watched the little French sailors marching round the capstan to the tune of—

"Malbrok, Malbrok, Malbrok, Malbrok, Malbrok, s'en vaten guerre," or that's what it sounded to me like.

On the passage home, the chief mate took to reading Shakespeare and became fascinated with it, a curious instance of how Shakespeare appeals even to uneducated

people. But though illiterate he was far from lacking in intelligence, and must have had a wonderful memory for he used to walk the deck all his night watches reciting long passages. Indeed, he essayed to do a little in that line himself, and he composed a long poem, of which I only remember one verse. A ship called the "Jamestjee Family," belonging to the same owners, was lying in Manila with us, and of course her Captain, Cobb, was entertained and shown over the Wylo by our skipper.

This is the first verse—

Said Cobb to Brown "What are these?"
With a look that was rather callous,
Said Brown to Cobb "Oh, if you please,
They're shifting boards for the ballast."

The carpenter who had heard the verses a good many times asked me the meaning of the word "callous." Another one of which I remember a verse relates to an incident that happened to Killick when he was master of a ship. It appears that a monkey that was being taken home had got loose and become fierce, so Killick called for a gun to shoot it, but the gun was overcharged by the steward, a man named Morgan, and knocked Killick, who was known as the admiral, down.

This is how the mate relates it—

“ And there stood poor Morgan looking quite
glum,
T'was diversion to every beholder,
And there stood the admiral just like a drum,
As he cried “ You've dislocated my
shoulder.” ”

Poor Robinson. A year afterwards he was given command of a ship called the “ Omba,” and left London bound for Australia never to be heard of again.

He was a man with lots of nerve and presumably being ambitious and longing to make a smart passage, he carried on sail till he drove her right under.

A curious mania took possession of the ship's company on that passage, a mania for growing canary seed. Some of the officers and sailors were taking home the little yellow birds and there was a good deal of canary seed aboard and as everybody knows it will grow in a saucer of water, and looks pretty. It was amusing to see grizzled old shell backs gloating over a tin plate and comparing the week's growth with others equally enthusiastic.

I have seen similar rages break out in a long passage, once of all things in the world

for making draught boards or chequer boards, as sailors call them. Wise skippers encourage such manias, and on the homeward passage men are inclined to get weary and discontented and it gives them something to think about.

We reached Boston soon after Christmas and there I heard of a new invention named the telephone, which was described as talking along a wire, but though Boston is indeed the hub of the universe, its intellectual culture did not extend to docklane or sailor town, for it seemed to me to be amply supplied with dance halls and drinking saloons, but the Americans, owing to German immigration have adopted the mild German beer as the national beverage, which is much more wholesome and less heady than the noxious stuff that is brewed and drunk in England.

We sailed thence to London with a cargo of maize, oil cake and notions. and after six weeks ashore I joined the *Lothian*, a somewhat similar ship to the *Wylo*. Her Captain was a middle aged man named*** a good seaman, but stern and a great believer in discipline, which he maintained

partly by the help of a pet bo'sun whom he carried, a huge Newfoundland man named Allen, who believed in a word and a blow, but the blow invariably came first.

He was the strongest man I ever met and about the most brutal, and when in his cups was a perfect terror.

When the Captain retired and took to stevedoring ashore, he kept Allen with him as a sort of foreman; he used to delight in displaying his strength, but he overdid it for once when lifting a heavy weight, he strained himself and had to go to the London Hospital where he died of all things in the world—of consumption. Like a good many other strong men, I suppose, he had plenty of muscular and little vital strength.

The Captain was the most reserved man I ever sailed under, and never even conversed with his officers. He spoke to me once when I was serving the eyes of the ratlines in the mizzen rigging and he was stalking in dignified silence beneath. I happened to drop a rope yarn or two on the deck, and he told me to throw them overboard not to drop them on the deck; unfortunately, I happened to drop another when he said,

“Damn you, if you drop another ropeyarn on the poop, I’ll send you out of this altogether.” As I should have had to go back to the dreaded bo’sun and ask for another job the threat was a pretty serious one.

Running the Easting down, that is, running East off the Cape of Good Hope, with a westerly wind, I witnessed a shocking accident, for which I think the Captain was greatly to blame. We sprang our main tops’l yard, and rather than lose a capful of wind, by lowering the yard on the lifts, the Captain ordered it to be temporarily fished, or repaired at the masthead. But whilst engaged on the work the halliards carried away, and the mate and two men fell overboard.

As the ship swept past them the mate, an excellent swimmer, sang out to the man at the wheel to put the helm hard down. The Captain, hearing the confusion, rushed on deck and asked the second mate what was the matter.

“Oh,” replied that worthy, “only the mate and two men overboard.”

“Only,” said the skipper, “Well, that’s

enough, isn't it?" A boat was lowered but, of course, we could find no trace of the missing men,

The mate had been married in New York the previous voyage and at the instigation of his wife's father an enquiry was held, when the ship returned to London, but nothing came of it, though I did hear that a Dutchman who was trying to blurt out something about the yard being at the masthead, was immediately suppressed.

It was'nt property it was only human lives that were lost so it did'nt matter much anyhow; had the ship been cast away without even a sacrifice of life, although the Captain might have been guiltless of incompetence or neglect, his certificate would have been cancelled to a certainty.

The same evening the second mate came into the half deck and said that that was the "best thing which could possibly have happened for him," a remark that shocked the not over tender feelings of the bo'sun himself.

We were bound for Yokohama, and when we made port to my joy I was appointed one of the boat's crew whose duty it was to

pull the Captain ashore and wait there for him. Japan then was not the power she has since become, and I remember reading an article in the newspaper on the smallpox which was raging there, amongst other directions for avoiding the disease the Editor advised his readers "not to contract to the smallest extent the filthy habits of the natives." I don't think they would write like that now that Japan is civilised and has acquired "Dreadnoughts" and other murder machines. I witnessed too, a procession of the "fali," for, I believe, the "falic cult" entered largely into the religion of old Japan.

I must admit I could see no beauty in the women, and though the men, like most orientals were politer than westerners, yet I do not think they are as clever as the Chinese, though they are more ready to adopt western ideas.

I remember the next voyage, being in the wharf in Singapore when a boat load of officers from a Japanese gunboat came ashore, I think it was the first gunboat they ever had, they were gorgeous in English uniform, and the ritual observed was also

English, for they have taken our model for their navy, like they have imitated the Germans in their military organisation. They looked very consequential, and tried to look dignified, whilst the Chinamen stood and laughed at them and made remarks, the import of which I could guess.

I also used to visit the tea houses and make acquaintance with the geishas and muzmeys, but I think that the charms of the tea houses, like those of the women, have been over-rated.

We left Yokohama in ballast for Amoy, where we loaded tea for New York, one of the last cargoes of tea ever carried by sail, and we made our port in 84 days, a record passage.

Either the police of New York must be very inefficient or the thieves very expert, for our principal duties there were to act as special constables amongst the tea in the wharf to see that no one stole it. There was even a special private detective sitting armed under the piles all day to prevent people from boring up through the wharf and tapping the cases, and at night we had a watchman patrolling the deck armed to

the teeth. But neither life nor property are as safe in America as they are in England, though since then I think New York and other great cities of the States have attempted to set their house in order and things may have improved.

CHAPTER III.

Farcical Regulations—Musical Chips—A Practical Joke—Female Coal Passers—Primitive Firearms—Bangkok—A Word in Season—St. Helena—Examinations—Malthus discredited—British Rule beneficent—Spanish Guests.

When the ship arrived in London I incurred Killick's displeasure by not remaining on board till he arrived, but my people having moved from Lancashire to Blackheath, as soon as the ship was berthed I cleared out and went home. He complained bitterly to my father of my want of respect, and I'm sure he never forgave me for it; some people want such deference shown them.

I decided not to sail in the Lothair again, as the bo'sun had a down on me, and I'm sure would have been delighted to 'do me in' as he termed it, so after three weeks ashore I joined a little barque called the "Hope," I believe she was originally one of three sister ships, named by some pious owner the "Faith, Hope and Charity."

I must have had more pluck in those

days than I have now, for I would not make a voyage in her again for all the earth and the riches thereof, and whenever I have a nightmare or unpleasant dream it always takes the same shape, and I am outward bound again in the Hope. She was a little iron barque of 400 tons, and there were only thirteen of us aboard all told. Moreover, she was badly found and horribly overloaded, and whenever there was the slightest sea her decks were awash, while in heavy weather she simply shipped green seas; how we ever made the voyage in safety is a mystery to me.

I believe there were and still are some rules and regulations about the overloading of ships, and there is a white circle with a line through it ostentatiously ornamenting every ship's side. This is known as Plimsoll's mark, and a ship is not supposed to be loaded beneath it, that is to say, the line running through the circle is not to be immersed in the water. But as anybody apparently could paint the mark as high up or as low down on the ship as they liked it obviously was very little guarantee that the ship was not overloaded. The whole thing was nothing

but a laughable farce, brought in about the year 1873, when Plimsoll had been calling public attention to the subject of overloaded and over insured vessels. It was parallel to telling a draper that he must use a yard measure, but he was at liberty to make the yard as long or as short as he liked.

I have called it a farce, but every rule and regulation that has been made for the comfort and safety of sailors was nothing but a farce. Every seaman was supposed to be allowed so many cubic feet of space for living and sleeping accommodation and yet I have seen a tiny fo'castle, in which there were only 8 bunks, on the door of which was painted in large letters the legend "Certified to accommodate twenty-four seamen." It would have been a physical impossibility for twenty-four men to have found standing room in the place.

There was another "Board of Trade" regulation that compelled a ship to carry at least one boat in the davits ready for lowering, in the event of a man falling overboard, and every ship that entered dock without a boat thus suspended was liable to a heavy fine. I don't know whether the

fine would ever have been enforced, most probably not, but the custom was for shipmasters to utterly ignore the rule if it was at all inconvenient to obey it, and to carry the boats keel uppermost on the skids, or if gunwale up to keep fowls in them, and then the day before the ship berthed to put a boat in the davits. What earthly use is it to make a rule that cannot be enforced ?

I understand that miners and others who follow dangerous trades are fenced round with rules and regulations. Let us hope that they are more practicable, and less easily ignored than those that protect or are supposed to protect seafaring men.

The Captain was presumably of Irish extraction, he had a partiality for the bottle which did not improve his temper, but otherwise I was fortunate in my shipmates, as the chief mate, Syder, the same whom I had seen fall from the Wylo's mizzen topgallant yard, was a man of a kind disposition, and his uniform fine behaviour made up to a great extent for the petty tyranny which the Captain used to indulge in. Poor Syder, I sailed with him in that ship

for eighteen months and found him a perfect gentleman, but his lot was a hard one, for at the end of the voyage he married, went in to steam, and whilst in charge of a country steamer, was foully murdered by Chinese river pirates, who came aboard his ship disguised as passengers, and to make matters worse he had sent for his wife to join him, and she arrived in Singapore only a few days after his death. My other messmate was a boy named Davis, whom I also found very pleasant as a companion and who is now a Trinity House Pilot, whilst the carpenter, or 'chips' as he is known aboard ship, was a young man, a Londoner, with a good voice and an accordion.

He used to sing an old song that was composed by Rochester, one of the wild gallants that adorned or disgraced the court of Charles II.

It was a pastoral song, and I used to wonder how it had survived so long, to be sung by the people long after it had been forgotten at court; the chorus was—

“There was a Moll and Bet, and Poll and Pet,
And Dorothy Draggletail,
And Polly is a charming girl to carry the
milking pail.”

He also used to sing a doleful ballad which I never heard elsewhere, that was not without merit for those who like that pathetic sort of refrain, and when he did sing it, it invariably had the effect of making the sailmaker, an old confederate soldier, a grizzled veteran of the American Civil War, cry like a child. This is the first verse—

“ ’Twas on a Sabbath morn, the bells had
chimed for Church,
And young and old were gathering around
the rustic porch,
There came an aged man, in a soldier
garb was he,
And looking round, he smiling said, “Do
you remember me ? ”

There is a lot more of it. Of course, naturally nobody remembers him after an absence of nearly a lifetime, and it concludes with the despairing line—

“ Then looking up to Heaven, he said,
“ May God remember me.”

A most amusing incident happened in the S. E. trades, at least, amusing to us though the skipper no doubt failed to see the comic side of it.

We were going along one beautiful moonlight night with a four knot breeze when a full rigged ship that had been coming

up astern all day gradually overhauled us and came within hailing distance. I happened to be at the wheel and it is marine etiquette for the ship to hail the barque first, but on this occasion instead of the usual—"Barque ahoy? What barque is that?" the skipper of the strange ship yelled out something which sounded like—

"Yah he may no can no why he fore Royal yard."

"What," said the Captain, "I can't quite hear you."

"Yah he may no can no why he fore Rye yard."

"I can't quite understand," replied Kelly, "what do you say, Sir, about the fore Royal yard?" at the same time motioning me to bring her up a point or two.

"Yah he may no can why he fore Royal yard."

'Mr. Syder,' roared Kelly, now rapidly losing his temper, "go forard and see if there's anything amiss with that fore royal yard, boy, run up there and see if there's anything the matter with that fore royal yard. Hurry up, or I'll smarten you up with a rope's end. Now, Sir, I can't quite

catch it, what do you say about the fore royal yard ? ”

“ What do I say, what do I say, why if you had another leg where your nose is, you'd make a damned good washing tub, now do you understand ? ” at the same time putting his helm down leaving Kelly bursting with impotent rage.

We could'nt read the ship's name, and whether it was someone who had sailed with Kelly and owed him a grudge, or whether he was simply a man with a sense of humour and a taste for practical jokes I do not know, but needless to say that everybody in the ship except Kelly, was delighted, for he was a most unpopular skipper and everybody from the mate down hated him.

As the Captain and the mate were at loggerheads all the voyage, the mate used to fraternise with the carpenter and the boys, and the mania that took possession of us was what might be called “ the cult of the conundrum,” a somewhat banal amusement perhaps, the propounding and solving of riddles, but when we had read all the books up, and generally discussed and solved most of the problems of the Universe, it served

as a pastime in our brief leisure moments until the old tank arrived at Shanghai, after a passage of nearly five months' duration. We had brought out a cargo of coal, and having discharged it we sailed for Nagasaki in Japan for another. It seems strange that they should send all the way to England for coal when they can obtain it such a short distance away, but I suppose there is no coal in the world like the coal which is mined in Wales, we supply the world with their steam coal, and now Jeremiahs have risen up and told us there is only enough for one hundred and sixty years more, but posterity never did anything for us, so why should we stint ourselves for the benefit of posterity, anyhow, I think the best way to benefit posterity is to do the best one can for one's self and one's contemporaries. There have always been alarmists in the world from Cassandra down to Malthus, fortunately the prognostications of these "dismal Jimmies" have seldom been realised, and in any case it is always the unexpected and frequently the impossible that happens.

In Nagasaki women loaded us with

coal, and as they came on board with an endless procession each with a basket of coal on her head, they presented a rude contrast to the Japanese girl, as one sees them on the stage in such plays as the Mikado, about as great a contrast as the stage sailor presents to the real article. After discharging our cargo in Shanghai, we sailed for Amoy, a little town up a river.

There I had several opportunities of going ashore, and as it was a town in which but few Europeans reside, I had some chance of seeing the Chinese in their native state.

I hired a horse one day, rode into the country and came upon about 20 Chinamen shooting at a mark. They may have been a company of volunteers, but they wore no sort of uniform, and to judge from their dress and appearance they appeared to be Chinese merchants or tradesmen of the better sort. But what interested me was the fact that they were using the old matchlock musket, exactly the same type of musket with which the old Spanish conquistadores struck terror into the Incas of Peru, and which was superseded by the wheel and flint lock in the time of Charles II.

It seemed to have a fairly long range and fired a bullet about the size of a marble, which must have inflicted a frightful wound, it was very heavy and had an enormously long barrel, but it took about three minutes to load it, and it must have been difficult or almost impossible to use it in damp or wet weather. It had a very large trigger and on the trigger was fixed a couple of inches of burning tow.

After being loaded a trail of powder was laid from the touch hole to the trigger, which was three inches nearer the stock, the trigger was then pulled and the burning tow, brought in contact with the powder trail, which in its turn ignited the powder in the barrel which discharged the bullet.

After seeing them fired I could understand Cromwell's advice to his soldiers to "trust in God and keep their powder dry." By means of the sign language I gave the Chinamen to understand that I should like to fire one, which they permitted me to do, but not being used to the thing, the recoil nearly knocked me down, much to their amusement.

I suppose in the 16th and early 17th

century they did good execution with them, but I should have thought that as a missile weapon, a good bow and arrow, or a sling such as David slew Goliath with would have been more effective.

I also went into a temple of Joss house as sailors call them, and my conductor made a low obeisance to a hideous and grotesque idol, which no doubt represented some God in the Chinese religion. I wondered if he believed that the figure itself possessed any occult power, or if it was only an outward and visible representation of some invisible Deity.

I suppose in the beginning the latter view prevailed but in time the vulgar came to believe that virtue and power lie in the image itself. After all, no religion except the Jewish and Mohammedan seems to have been able to do without some visible representation of the God they worship. High Church people in England here bow to the altar, whilst the Greek Church prostrate themselves before the ikon, and the Roman Catholics to the Madonna.

I asked him about missionaries and I gathered that they made but few converts,

and those only from the poorest part of the population, there are, I have heard, some Christians known as "rice Christians," who attend Christian services and receive a weekly dole of rice from the missionaries.

From Amoy we sailed to Bangkok in Siam, which is a town situate some forty miles up a river, and I think is one of the hottest, most mosquito ridden places in the world.

The native town is built to a great extent in the river, the houses being supported on piles, like the old prehistoric lake dwellers.

Most of the trade seemed to be in German hands, at least, the drinking shops were and that was what our skipper seemed to take the most interest in. It was the duty of Davis and myself to man the gig and scull him about, and wait ashore for him till all hours of the night or morning, and as we had no awning in the boat we were exposed to the pitiless rays of the sun, and the heavy dews of night.

Indeed, Crawley, the Captain of the Lucia, a barque belonging to the same Company, remonstrated with him at last, and said, "Why don't you give those boys

an awning, Kelly? If you had native boatmen you'd give them an awning, but because they are white boys you have no consideration for them at all," but Kelly replied that the sailmaker was too busy to make one.

I never forgot the remark. Only a month ago I went to see Crawley, then settled on a farm in Suffolk, and though he had not remembered the circumstance he was pleased to see me and he remarked he had spoken a word in due season.

As well as mosquitos, fireflies swarmed in Bangkok, and of the two needless to say I much preferred the latter, there was a certain species of tree whose foliage they fed on, which they seemed to favour for some reason or other, and on a moonless night the effect of seeing one tree lit up entirely by fireflies was very pleasing. From there we loaded rice for Singapore, here we lay in what was then called the New Harbour, and where I had an experience which nearly ended fatally. Davis and myself sailed the mate ashore one Sunday, and coming back the sail halyards unrove and Davis started to swarm up the mast to reeve them with

the result that the boat instantly capsized. There was a choppy sea running at the time and the harbour swarmed with sharks. But fortunately there was no ballast in the boat so though she filled she did'nt sink, and a man of war's boat coming to our assistance towed her into the wharf.

Once the safety of our lives assured we began to wonder how we were to empty the boat, but the Malays on the wharf helped us, and after much labour and a great deal of shouting, managed to haul her up the steps, when, of course, the water ran out and we pulled away to the ship again rejoicing.

We talk about the benighted heathen, and are scarcely willing to credit them with the possession of any of the finer moral attributes, but had we been placed in a similar position in England would the dock hands and long shore loafers have worked for hours in our behalf without anything being paid for it, or without expecting to be rewarded in some shape or other, like these poor Malays did? We didn't even lose a boat-hook or rollock, and when the skipper heard of it he chuckled and said, "Oh, and so you

were all capsized, eh ? ” he was under the impression that we had capsized on our way to the shore with the mate aboard, and was very disappointed when he learned that the mate had escaped a ducking and that there was no one in the boat but we two boys.

At Singapore, we loaded tapioca for Marseilles, but ran out of provisions on the passage and had to put into St. Helena. I must admit, we were not disappointed with the island, which, towering out of the ocean as it does, has a most awe inspiring appearance ; it seems as if it was intended by Nature to be a prison and last resting place for a man like Napoleon. I think it would have been more in the fitness of things had the French nation allowed his body to remain there. Doubtless the island is the top of a mountain which once rose from the lost Atlantic of which Plato wrote.

The Captain took a case of gin aboard for his own consumption, but we could not have got many casks of provisions there for we soon ran short again, and became a veritable beggar of the sea, boarding every passing ship we could, cadging for food, till finally we begged our way as far as Gibraltar, not

before we had pulled five miles to an Italian ship from whom we got a pound and a half of sugar.

We arrived at Marseilles just at the time the Prince Imperial was killed and whilst some republicans marched the streets crying "Vive les Zulu," others looked upon it as a national disaster, but all united in declaring that now England ought to be satisfied as she had killed all the Napoleons.

All hands from the mate down left the ship there and I travelled home via Dieppe and New Haven, and in Paris I saw for the first time the electric light in use, for they had it in Paris long before we had it in London, and they used to say that it had caused a rise in the price of dogs, I suppose the point being that people had lost their eyesight through its brilliancy, and had to have dogs to lead them about.

As I had then been over four years at sea I was entitled to go up for my second mate's examination. Examinations and the granting of certificates of competency to seafaring men had not then been very many years in vogue, and I was very indignant with my brother, the Oxford graduate,

when he repeated a part of a speech that he had heard at the University in which the speaker said "Examinations are the order of the day, we have examinations for everything, in fact, we have now even examinations for the mercantile marine." (laughter), as if forsooth, the sailing and handling of a ship with a valuable cargo, and the heavy charge of anything from a dozen to four or five thousand lives, as in a passenger boat, was not as important as the possessing of a more or less imperfect knowledge of two languages, which have long since ceased to be spoken, and as if a shipmaster was not as necessary to society as an Oxford don, though indeed, he might not perhaps get paid as well, but I have noticed those who do the most work in the world always get the least pay.

For my part I found no difficulty in passing any of the examinations, yet I do not consider it a test of a man's ability, it is one thing to put a model ship about on a table, and quite a different thing to put a real ship about in a sea-way, besides, everybody went to a coach to be crammed up, and the coaches took care to find out the question which each particular examiner was likely

to ask, to become acquainted with their fads, in fact. I think the personal equation had a lot to do with it, the appearance and general style of the candidate, for I have known men go up time after time and fail, possibly the examiner did not think they would be a credit to the service.

Having passed, the next thing was to get a ship, and there I experienced some difficulty, and curiously enough competitions for officers' berths was keener then than it appears to be now.

I say curiously enough, for the ships now are much bigger, and yet they only carry practically the same number of officers, and being so much bigger I presume there are fewer of them, at any rate, there are certainly no more than there were then, moreover, the pay is better, and we read that the population of the British Isles has since increased by some ten millions.

Darwin and Wallace who formulated the theory of evolution and the survival of the fittest, both admit that they first hit on the idea through reading Malthus' "Essay on Population," yet I think, that the theory of Malthus that population tends to outrun

the means of subsistence ought to be pretty well discredited now, for even in my time I notice that there appears to be less competition than there was when I was a boy, and the means of living seem easier to obtain, notwithstanding the increase in population in the last twenty-five years. The reason why Raleigh tried to found colonies in America was to relieve the congested population of England when the total number of inhabitants is estimated not to have exceeded four millions, a little more than half the population of London now. It wasn't, I suppose, that there were really then too many mouths, but the land, then almost the sole source of wealth, had been enclosed and was in the hands of the few, the same state of things exists to a certain extent to this day, but commerce, manufacturing industry and easy and rapid means of transit relieves the pressure.

However, after some months I was appointed second mate of a barque called the *Windover*, she might be described as a sort of has been, for she was a beautiful model and had been a famous clipper in her time, but her owner, Findley, of Glasgow, had

lost the 'Spendthrift' which he had neglected to insure, and had fallen on evil days generally; indeed, when I joined her in the South West India Dock she had a man in possession aboard, and when we got to sea thrum mats being missing the men used to say that the owners had to sell the chafing gear to pay the shipkeeper.

However that may be we got to sea after some delay with a general cargo for Batavia, Banjuwangi and one or two other ports on the coast of Java.

She was commanded by the owner's son, but as he was notoriously addicted to the bottle, when in port we had a purser on board rejoicing in the name of Edward Walker Bill, to wet nurse him and generally do the shore work in harbour.

We had a fair run out but I found the Javanese ports so utterly uninteresting that I never left the ship the whole voyage which lasted exactly twelve months. Java, however, is I believe, an island rich in unexploited wealth, and I noticed that the Dutch were much stricter in their rule over the natives than we are with the natives of India.

A little incident that I remember will

illustrate this.

We were lying at anchor one night with a Dutch pilot aboard, I was on watch whilst the pilot was sleeping on deck on account of the heat.

There was a native boat alongside and the crew were indulging in a game of cards, their conversation annoyed my lord the pilot so he sent for a bucket of water and without saying anything threw it over the card players, who at once, without any protest, put their cards away. As he could understand the language I said to him, "What did they say when you threw the water over them?"

"Oh," he replied, "one said to the other it wasn't an Englishman who did that it was a Dutchman."

I thought the answer was characteristic. An English pilot might probably have cussed at them, and made them keep silence, but he would have scarcely thrown a bucket of water over them, without any previous warning.

A little of the copper had come off our bow during the passage, and they made that an excuse to compel us to go into dry dock

at Banjuwangi.

Of course, it was a put up job on the part of the dock people, the port officials and possibly also its surveyors, but if a man behaves as Findley did he must expect to be victimised.

We then had practical proof of the truth of the couplet that—

“ In matters of business, the fault of the
Dutch,

Is giving too little and asking too much.”
for they are equalled in their greed and rapacity only by the Spanish speaking people of Mexico and the Spanish Main. It took about six pilots to take us from the harbour into the Dock, the idea being that the plunder ought to be equally shared, and for their services, like the Black Horse Cavalry at Waterloo, they never left off charging, not content with that they came aboard afterwards for presents.

I have mentioned the greed of the Spanish officials. I remember an amusing incident once when having cast anchor in the port of Vera Cruz about six custom house officers boarded us at about 11-30 a.m. The first word they said on reaching the

deck was "breakfast," and the Captain, who naturally wished to please them in order to expedite matters, turned to the steward and said—

"Oh, certainly, Steward, get some lunch ready for these gentlemen," when one of them with a dignified Spanish gesticulation replied,

"No, Captain, no, no, lunch, breakfast." They understood that lunch is a light meal aboard a ship, breakfast is a heavy one, and they knew that they would get more for breakfast. They stuffed themselves for about an hour, they returned to the deck and, I suppose, they subsisted on that meal till the next English ship came in.

In Batavia we loaded sugar for Greenock and I wasn't sorry to bid adieu to these present demanding, gin swilling Dutchmen.

CHAPTER IV.

A Tyrannical Skipper—A Cruel Doctor—An Amazing Case—A Modern Smuggler—Mixed Metaphors—"It's my own invention"—A Man Overboard—Victoria—Degraded Indians—Shanghaing—Boarding House Masters—Sea Discipline.

The voyage in the "Windhover" had lasted exactly twelve months, so I was able to go up for my chief mate's examination, the rule being that a man must sail twelve months as second mate before he can pass for mate, and twelve months as chief mate before he can pass for master. I passed easily enough but as the Windhover was sold, I had to look elsewhere for employment. and I found it after a few weeks, being appointed second mate of the "Waitaru," owned by the New Zealand Shipping Company, a twelve hundred ton ship, and carrying freight and passengers to Wellington New Zealand. I found I was to sail with another Captain Brown, as Shakespeare says "the self same name," but unfortunately not of a "nobler nature" than the benevolent skipper of the Wylo. He was the sort

of man whom we should call in these days "no class," being a cooperer by trade, and being one of those, doubtless—most commendable, but sometimes somewhat unpleasant individuals, a self-made man.

He used to boast that it was his custom to put the fear of God into his officers at the beginning of a voyage, but that was no proof of any great courage on his part, seeing that an officer is entirely dependent on the captain for promotion, or even for continuing in his present position, for if the captain likes to withhold a reference from a mate it is impossible for him to get another ship, which is a very serious matter indeed for a man, especially if he has a wife and family to support.

Possibly it was because I was of somewhat superior education to the majority of men whom he had met that he treated me fairly well, the greater part of the voyage, but he had what is known as a "down" on the mate, a Scotchman like himself, and as good a seaman as ever trod a ship's decks. Steam had not quite then captured all the passenger trade to Australia and New Zealand, indeed, even emigrants were then

carried on sailing ships and we had three saloon passengers and about fifty second class passengers aboard.

The saloon passengers consisted of two maiden ladies and their brother, and a doctor who had a free passage in consideration of his professional services.

The passengers, of course, had grievances, they always had, they must have something to talk about on a three months' passage, and equally, of course, the Doctor quarrelled with the Captain and out of spite, in order to deprive the Captain of their services, he made as many men lay up as he possibly could, and on the slightest excuse, he would put a man's leg or arm into splints so that it would be impossible for him to work. He carried some firearms and some ammunition with him and when the ship made the low latitudes of the Cape of Good Hope, where sea birds abound, his amusement and that of the other male passenger was to shoot at them.

It was cruel sport, if sport it can be called, fortunately, they were very poor shots, but occasionally they would wing a magnificent albatross, or mollyhawk, and

then it was sickening to see it drop into the water and all the other birds set on it and kill it. In doing so they were, no doubt, obeying some instinct or natural law. He also used to catch them, which can be easily done by towing a hook astern baited with a piece of pork and when placed on the deck it is quite impossible for them to rise into the air. It was his delight then to string up the lovely creatures by the neck to the boat's skids, until they were choked to death and then dissect them.

The Captain didn't encourage it, But I couldn't understand why he allowed such sickening cruelty aboard his ship.

I really think it's true what Miss Lind and the other anti-vivisectionists affirm, that doctors in time come to take a positive pleasure in the sufferings they inflict, at any rate this doctor did.

Tennyson groans despairingly about nature "red in tooth and claw." I think when we have set our own house in order it will be time enough to accuse nature of cruelty. The same poet also writes about the "ape and the tiger" and wonders "when we shall lay, the ghost of the brute

that is in us."

I think this is rather hard on the brute. For man to father his cruel instincts on to his brute ancestors is neither reasonable or just. Wherever we get our love of cruelty from we certainly don't get it either by example or heredity from the brute. No brute yet ever gloated over an "auto de fé," nor would a brute have been capable of appreciating the spectacles that Nero and the other Emperors provided for the populace of Rome, not to speak of our vaunted sports, or orgies of blood, known as pheasant shoots, or the sickening spectacle of a live fox or other animal waved round the huntsman's head and then thrown to the expectant hounds, whilst men and women watch the scene in calm enjoyment.

I used frequently to incur the 'old man's' displeasure (the Captain is always known aboard ship as the 'old man') because when walking the poop during the first dog watch, or on Sunday, when not engaged in carrying on the work on the main deck, the passengers used to talk to me.

He admitted that his objection was principally "that he always imagined that

we were talking about him," which indeed was not the case, and when I asked him how I could avoid their conversation seeing that my place was on the poop, he told me to "get to Hell to leeward out of it," that is, to go to the other side or lee side of the deck, the officer's place when the captain is below always being the weather side.

Two years afterwards, however, when he had left her for another command, she was run down in the Channel in perfectly fine weather by a ship belonging to the same Company, the catastrophe being due to the attention of the officer of the watch being diverted by the passengers. Still it was a difficult thing in mid ocean to avoid their attentions, and in any case why did he not speak to them about it.

We ran out to Wellington in eighty-four days, and I never can understand why in the Australian and New Zealand trade sailing ships cannot hold their own with steamers. They take, it is true, from thirty to sixty days longer to make the passage, but to the credit side of the account may be placed the fact they have no canal dues to pay and no coal bill to meet, but possibly

they find it more difficult to get freight, all time saving devices being popular in these days of rush, and aeroplanes, that invariably seem to end in killing their pilots.

When in Wellington we had an amusing police court case. The mate on the passage out had knocked a nigger sailor down for giving him cheek, and the man summoned him when we made our port. But in stating his case he prejudiced it for he said to the magistrate, "He called me missing link, sah, he called me monkey, sah." And in tones of deep solemnity, "he called me soldier, sah." But the magistrate was an old army officer, and he said—

"Better men than you have been soldiers, my man," and at once dismissed the case. I may add for the benefit of the uninitiated that the word "soldier" is a term of contempt at sea, a useless, idle man being termed a soldier, and loafing or idling is termed "soldiering." Jack is happier in his metaphor when he terms a man who has no wheel or look-out during his watch on deck at night—and can, in consequence, in fine steady weather doze about the deck all the time, a "farmer," for of late years I have had

some experience of farmers and do not think that they are by any means the hardest working people in the community. In Wellington, too, the skipper got into trouble smuggling tobacco.

Shipmasters have the privilege of taking their tobacco out of bond in London, that is to say, it has never paid duty, consequently they get it cheap, and can sell it cheap to the sailors and yet make a good profit. But when the ship arrives at a port where the weed is a dutiable commodity it is all placed under seal by the custom authorities.

But Brown only declared a portion of his stock and stowed some hundreds of pounds away, loading the steward up with it to take ashore in the evening.

Unfortunately, it was done so clumsily that nearly everybody in the ship knew of it, and some one innocently or otherwise gave the game away, and the steward was stopped on the wharf one night and politely told to turn his pockets out. The ship was then searched and the undeclared tobacco found and the steward got six months or fifty pound fine. It was arranged that the steward should do the time and the Captain

pay him the fifty pounds, and so I believe the matter ended, but I doubt if Brown ever tried to smuggle tobacco again.

Kipling in one of his poems makes the coast lights say :—

“ We greet the clippers wing by wing that race the Southern wool,” a case of poetical license for the wool ships never raced, nor can a square rigged ship run wing and wing but only a ‘fore and after,’ and though we loaded wool for London, when Kipling wrote his poem the wool was practically all carried by steam. I sometimes wonder whether the charm of poetry lies in the idea it conveys to the mind or in the sound to the ear, because poets when writing on nautical subjects, or using nautical metaphors, make an awful hash of it.

In Tennyson’s admittedly fine poem “ Crossing the Bar,” he says

“ And I shall meet my pilot face to face,
When I have crossed the bar.”

The idea of meeting the pilot for the first time after having crossed the bar is deliciously absurd, seeing that the sole duty of a pilot is to come out and take the ship over the bar into port, or vice versa

over the bar to sea. Longfellow also in another well known poem the "Wreck of the Hesperus," makes the child address the father thus—

"Oh, Father, I hear the church bells ring,
Oh, say what may it be?"

to which her father replies—

"'Tis a fog bell on a rock bound coast,
And he steered for the open sea."

It is obvious that if he steered for the open sea he must have had a fair wind, that is a wind blowing off the shore, in which case it would have been a sheer impossibility for his schooner to be wrecked on the reef of "Norman's Woe."

As I had made two voyages as second mate, I thought it time to look out for a chief's berth, and having heard that the barque, Prince Rupert, required a mate I went aboard and proffered my services, which somewhat to my surprise, were immediately accepted by the Captain.

It's strange how a Company can grow old and suffer from paralysis and senility like a man. I once asked a city acquaintance of mine if he could explain it and he accounted for it by the amount of tradition

that existed in an office.

Whatever the reason, the Hudson Bay Company, though an excellent company to serve and one that treated its employees most liberally, seemed to me in many respects behind the age. The Prince Rupert herself was an old wooden barque that leaked like a basket, and required to keep afloat, pumping out every four hours in fine weather, and every two hours when there was anything like a wind blowing, and the other ships that the company owned were more or less on a par with her. Otherwise, she was a most comfortable barque, with high wooden bulwarks, and as she rode high out of the water and was never overloaded she scarcely ever shipped any water aboard, a great and pleasing contrast to the more modern clipper built vessels. She was named of course, after the founder of the Company, the nephew of his most Christian Majesty, Charles II., who granted to the "honourable company of gentlemen adventurers" about a fourth of the North American Continent, a bequest that for colossal cheek is only equalled by that of the Pope who gave to the King of Spain practically all South

Western America, and to the King of Portugal all the East India, and not the least curious part of the transaction is that as far as I can make out the claim of the Company to most of the land thus granted does not seem to have been disputed.

I suppose they took themselves seriously these Popes and Kings, who thus claimed the right to give to their courtiers and favourites continents and countries, not only the land, but even the inhabitants as well; but one wonders if they never asked themselves by what right they thus disposed of the world and its inhabitants; moreover, for a man to take possession of a tract of territory then, was a very different thing from one country annexing another now when the rights of the individual are respected, and the matter simply means a change of flags and a transfer of allegiance.

She was bound for Victoria, Vancouver Island, and commanded by W. Neil Shaw, who claimed to be a nephew of Shaw, of the firm of Shaw, Savill, the large shipowners, though I have since heard that he had no nephews. He was a good seaman but a shocking egoist, and he used to walk the deck

with me all the first watch of the night holding forth. His theme was always the same, it might be described as Shaw upon Shaw, and when the limit of boredom had been reached and I could no longer feign to be interested he used to tell me "I took no interest in the business and was only fit to read Shakespeare and rot like that." What he really meant was that I took no interest in him. He had not an original idea in his head, but he claimed great originality in his way of conducting his business and was a great hand for evolving patent labour saving appliances.

We carried the boats in the skids keel up, and he had patent lashings on them so that in the event of a man falling overboard all you had to do was to knock out a toggle here, cast off a hook there, rip this with an axe, wind that with something else, turn the boat keel up, launch her, and there you are, don't you know.

Unfortunately, in the Straits of Juan de Fuca there was an opportunity to test the practicality of his patents, and they all failed signally. We were beating up the Straits in a heavy sea way under single

reefed topsails, and a man named Screech was washed off the jib boom whilst furling the jib.

It was my forenoon watch below, but as I had been on deck till 10 a.m. and was coming on watch again at noon, I had only divested myself of my outer clothing and was lying down in the carpenter's bunk in the half deck. I heard the commotion of course, and ran on deck, when we cut all the boat's lashings, turned her keel up, watched the roll, and launched her right off the skids over the side.

Two Dutchmen, an Englishman and myself jumped into her, but, of course, there was not the ghost of a chance of rescuing the man, who, encumbered with oilskins and sea boots, must have sunk instantly, it was a miracle how the boat herself managed to live in such a sea. When we got alongside again the other three, small blame to them, instantly swarmed up the boat's falls on to the deck leaving me to hook her on, a difficult and dangerous job in such a heavy sea. However, I managed it at last but was too exhausted with cold to regain the ship, and was thrown out of the boat into the

water, and had it not been for the presence of mind of an old Dutchman named Gunnerson, who made a bowline in the end of a rope and threw it me, in which I managed to put one leg, I should certainly have perished.

It was, of course, the second mate's place on an occasion of that kind to go in the boat, but I don't think his nerves were up to it, and as he was the Captain's "white haired boy," having been sent aboard from the office, and had, or was supposed to have, an uncle who had some influence in shipping circles, he escaped all blame, from the Captain, at any rate.

The skipper was not a drinking man, but I fancy he must have been having a peg or two or he would never have been carrying so much sail, trying to show off as there were several other vessels also beating up with us, bound for Victoria, which we made the next day.

Nor would he have remarked to the man at the wheel, after the occurrence, "it didn't much matter as he wasn't much good anyhow."

I wonder how the idea got about that

a man in the water has to sink three times before he finally disappears, like the million stamp story, it is ubiquitous and it is implicitly believed. As a matter of fact, if a man cannot swim he instantly sinks, and never comes to the surface again until weeks afterwards. Moreover, a man struggling in the water always acts in a way calculated to make him sink, for he throws his arms above his head, which, of course, causes him to sink instantly. I believe scientists explain the action as an hereditary habit, handed down from our semi simian ancestors, when man was arboreal, and on finding himself falling would of course throw his arms above his head to clutch a branch above him.

The next day we made Victoria which is after Nagasaki in Japan, in my opinion, the prettiest little harbour in the world, and the town itself was in those days interesting. It was, of course, originally a fort founded by the Hudson Bay Company for the purpose of trading with the Indians, and although then a fairly sized town it had not lost quite all its primitive simplicity. Owing to the influence of the Hudson Bay Company, who

up till the opening of the 'Canadian Pacific Railway,' had exclusively dominated it, it was conservative and unprogressive, very different from its neighbour, and rival, the new town of Vancouver on the mainland over the way.

There was great rivalry and jealousy between the towns. Vancouver being the terminus of the C.P.R. was, of course, made the port of entry for the Pacific Mail Steamship Co., much to the disgust of the older and less progressive citizens of Victoria, who wanted the boats to come to their town.

Many of the richest and most influential men there then were said to have Indian blood in them, and were called the 'Siwashocracy' by the new comers.

Naturally, in the early and middle eighteenth century, the place was very isolated, much more difficult to reach from England than Australia, and many of the Hudson Bay servants married squaws or Indian women, the particular tribe that roamed the region being known as Siwashis.

The Hudson Bay Co. had manufactured a language, or at least a jargon as a means of communication with the natives that was

known as Chinoosh. I got hold of a primer or a sort of dictionary once and it seemed to be a mixture of all dialects and though not what might be called a literary language it doubtless did well enough for trading purposes in the golden days when the price of an old musket was a heap of furs and skins that would when piled up reach from stock to barrel end.

I expect the language now is not only dead but forgotten and the factors have to pay a little more for their skins. How the supply is kept up year after year is a mystery to me, one would naturally think that the animals that supply them would in time become extinct.

At that time, though almost unknown in England, the telephone had just been introduced, and the people seemed to go half crazy over it, the mystery and novelty of talking from Victoria to Esquimalt, twelve miles away, seemed to "tickle them to death," as the Americans say. Even now in rural England it is quite unknown, and many country people won't believe it is possible to speak from a distance over a wire, but those are the people who have never been more than

three or four miles out of their parish in their lives and have never seen a railway train.

The Indians themselves, at any rate, those I came across in the neighbourhood of the town, seemed to be a degraded lot, although the government treated them paternally, allotted them a reservation, and inflicted a heavy penalty on anyone found selling them any form of alcoholic drink. But, of course, primitive peoples when brought into contact with what we call civilization degenerate, they adopt our vices, but leave our virtues severely alone, whilst if they possess any pleasing vices hitherto unknown to us we adopt them, this is exemplified particularly in the case of San Francisco where the Chinese immigrants have introduced the opium habit, which is rife amongst the inhabitants of the golden state.

In feature they seemed to resemble their near neighbours the Japanese, and it is possible that the island was peopled by immigrants from that nation, who sailed or drifted across in prehistoric times.

We discharged our cargo by the old simple plan of a horse and pulley, a rope rove

through a block in the yard arm, hooked on to a case in the hold, with a horse on the wharf at the other end who walked away with it. I was told they had tried a steam donkey engine, but it was discarded as being altogether too up-to-date for the traditions of the Company.

We loaded skins and various miscellaneous cargo, including a large native idol, which now, I believe, adorns the British Museum, and sailed for London, where we arrived after a passage of 165 days, the *Prince Rupert* was not a clipper.

I thought it would look better if I made two voyages in the same ship, so though I was not particularly struck on *Shaw*, I sailed in her again for *Victoria*, but as there was no cargo for us there we sailed in ballast for *San Francisco*. *San Francisco*, or *Frisco* as it is called for short, is celebrated in nautical circles for its crimps, a crimp being a man who ostensibly keeps a sailors' boarding house but makes his money by stealing a sailor from one ship and shipping him in another. This process is known as "Shanghaing." The uninitiated might wonder where the profit came in, but in *San*

Francisco men for European bound vessels are sometimes very scarce, wages are high, but the sailor does not benefit by that as two or three months wages are paid in advance, ostensibly to the sailor, really to the crimp or boarding house master who brings him aboard. Sometimes when he cannot get sailors, the crimp will try and foist off landmen on the shipmasters. Brown, known as "Shanghai Brown," had a pole erected in his back garden, on which he placed a cow's horn, and when he intended to palm off a green hand on a skipper, he used to make him solemnly march twice round the pole, then when a skipper asked him if he had ever been to sea before, he could with truth answer that he "had been twice round the horn." A man who has been twice round Cape Horn is, of course, accounted more or less a sailor. And in every boarding house there is what is known as the "shipping coat," a sort of monkey jacket of nautical cut, stained with sea water, guaranteed to convert a landsman into a sailor by simply putting it on.

Also the story runs that Shanghai Brown once shipped a dead man and received the

bounty money for him. Not as difficult a thing to do as it at first appears, as the sailors are frequently brought off speechless drunk, and the deceased was put aboard a few hours before the ship sailed, the mate was told to let him sleep off his liquor and when he woke up he would find him a first rate hand.

The same man also shipped one of his own runners. He had brought several men aboard and the captain said "Where's the other man, I shipped four and you've only brought three."

"Here he is," said Brown, pointing to his runner, and despite his protests, the unfortunate man was put in irons, and forced to make a voyage to Europe against his will.

As soon as our anchor was down an armed policeman boarded us to keep the runners off till the sails were furled, so many complaints having been made to the authorities that the men were taken out of the ship, and the canvas was left hanging in the buntlines. Of course, they were not forced to leave the ship, and in doing so they sacrificed all pay due to them, and sensible ones remained aboard, but the great majority

found it impossible to withstand the eloquent lies, the proffered friendship, and the vile whisky of the boarding masters' agents.

As soon as they were out of the ship, of course, being on American soil they were free men in theory, the captain could not get them even if he had wished to do so, but they were treated with scant courtesy by their new found friends and after being a week or so on shore, plied with a certain amount of bad whisky, found themselves bound for Europe again with nothing but a bad headache, and a receipted advance note as a legacy from their effusive hosts.

The captain of the ship they desert is not very much troubled over the matter, as though he will have to pay a little higher wages for the homeward run, that is more than compensated for in other ways. All arrears of pay due them is left behind and that is directly to the owners credit, and indirectly to his, as the cheaper he sails his ship the better, of course, he is thought of by his employers. His shore bills for provisions is also greatly reduced, for although the fare in harbour is worse and scantier even than the sea diet, still the

sailors must be fed on something. Moreover he does not feel the need of their services much as there are generally enough apprentices aboard to do most of the work absolutely required in port, so in the end everybody is satisfied, except the sailor, and he of course, doesn't count.

Whether our men had more than the ordinary sailor's intelligence, or whether the ship was too comfortable, they turned a deaf ear at the blandishments of the runners, and their promises of procuring them good soft easy berths, for none of them went ashore, for which for my part I was very glad, as when a man has no means of enforcing his authority except by his own personal strength of will or muscle, it makes a big difference to his comfort and happiness, as to what sort of a crew he has to command on a long sea voyage.

It is obviously impossible to give a man the sack at sea for idleness, insolence or incompetence, and a mate has to depend very much on himself for seeing that his orders are obeyed with alacrity. This is better understood in an American ship than an English one where the chief quality

looked for in an officer is an ability to use his fists, and a competent knowledge of how to knock a man down and kick him for falling. In an American ship, too, the masters and officers hang more together, and the carpenter and sailmaker live in the cabin, so there is a strong afterguard and sailors are easily cowed by one or two determined men.

We loaded that peculiarly Californian product, the beautiful redwood which is grown and used so largely in the golden state, the first cargo ever shipped to London, and also we took the first cask of Californian wine, which for my part, I prefer either to the French or Australian brand.

This time, however, owing to being in luck in getting a prevalence of fair winds we quite outdid ourselves, making the passage in 145 days.

CHAPTER V.

Interesting Passengers—Intellectual Indians—Indian Jugglers—An Official Enquiry—A Ferocious Sentence—The Sydney Larrikin—Under Canvas again—A Strike Breaker—Schooner Sailing—Honolulu—Beach-combers—The Solitude of a Crowd—A Story of Queen Victoria—Victoria again.

At that time, about the middle of the eighties, steam ships were beginning to take the carrying trade away from sail, and most ambitious young officers were trying to obtain berths on steamships, or going into steam as it was termed.

The pay was better, the fare more palatable, and on the bigger steamships and where passengers were carried, where three watches were kept, the work, though more monotonous and uninteresting, was easier, and as soon as I had passed my master's examination and got my master's certificate I looked around for a berth. I had heard that in the British India boats that traded on the Indian coasts quick promotion could be obtained, so I signed a three years' contract to serve them, joining the service

as fourth mate, for it is the custom when a man joins a company, no matter what certificate or credentials he may possess, or what position he may have occupied in the service, to commence on the lowest rung of the ladder. They gave me a passage out second class in the *Kerbala*, along with about a dozen more officers and engineers, the engineers being raw highlanders just out of the shop, for the engineers in the mercantile marine almost invariably hail from North of the Tweed. I found the passage somewhat tedious but we picked up various types of passengers at the different ports, and I was most interested in two Austrians, who had secured a deck passage at Port Said, as they seemed to be ideal soldiers of fortune, and though quite impecunious, were educated men evidently belonging to good families.

They had just served as volunteers on the Turkish side in the then recent Russo-Turkish war, and seemed to love fighting for its own sake, or, as they said, for the excitement of it.

They were apparently able to speak almost every European tongue, and said that

when they passed through a country they picked up the language without any difficulty. They seemed to be a type of man in producing which England once excelled in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but I fancy about the middle of the eighteenth when the country became rich and commercial, the love of comfort and wealth took the place of the love of adventure and of war, for we no longer produce the breed now in any quantity, certainly, I never came across an English soldier of fortune in all my travels.

For such a long time we have been so well protected by the policemen, that we no longer know how to fight, and to the average citizen or "man in the street," as he is termed, the idea of fighting in any shape or form is utterly repellent.

Don't we gather poor, hard-up, half starved out-of-works and loafers, feed them, drill them, put a rifle in their hands, and give them a shilling a day to do what little fighting there is to be done for us? The Darwinian theory extends to the mental attributes as well as the physical ones, and just as a domestic fowl, having no occasion

to use them loses the power of its wings, so men who for generations have had no occasion to use their courage or to exercise martial instincts, in time lose the courage and the instincts themselves.

On reaching Calcutta I was appointed fourth mate on the "Goalpara," and I found my duties consisted principally in tallying cargo at the fore hatch, and bossing the "kalashi's," as the native sailors are called. The work was very uninteresting so I was very glad when I was promoted to third mate of the "Khandulla," where I was entitled to keep the first watch of the night, and the forenoon watch. Whilst in port I was promoted to tallying freight at the main hatch, the second mate having the after hatch whilst the chief mate is exempt from tallying cargo and exercises a general supervision.

In the "Goalpara" we went from Calcutta all round the peninsula to Bombay, calling at almost every port, for freight and passengers, and it interested me to note the different types of natives who came aboard, and the various shades of complexion from the light brown of the high caste Ayran to

the deep black of the aboriginal native inhabitants who were indigenous to the country before the white conquerors overran it, and by inter-marriage with whom the latter now owe their dusky colour. I suppose in the hope of keeping their blood pure, originated the system of caste, but though I tried I never could understand it anymore than I could understand the religions of the Indians. But I thought that amongst the baboo or clerkly caste the standard of intelligence and education seemed very high. We used to have tally clerks aboard in Calcutta earning about twenty rupees a month who had the degree of B.A., who had a thorough knowledge of the old Sanskrit language, and were well versed in English literature and science. I used to fraternise with them thereby incurring the odium of the other officers, who said I preferred the company of coolies as they termed them, to their charming society, which I certainly did.

We are told that our rule in India is most beneficent, and the natives are happy under it, and I suppose it is so, but it is hard to realise when one notes the con-

temptuous way we treat the natives, many of them better men than ourselves. I am sure the spectacles one sees of drunken white men in Calcutta is enough to make one ashamed of one's colour.

I stood once in the street with a group of natives watching the antics of three or four drunken sailors, or rather firemen, from a steamship, and a baboo turned to me and said, "There these are the people who send missionaries to convert us."

The skipper of the "Goalpara" had a "Winchester" rifle, and whilst lying at Diamond Harbour he amused himself shooting bromlzkites on the water. The ship was crowded with natives and as every bird turned legs up dead, a groan went up from the ship's deck. The Hindoos, I believe, are by their religion forbidden to take life needlessly, and even to a man who was under no such prohibition it was sickening to see such wanton cruelty.

At last the mate remonstrated with him, pointing out to him that it shocked the natives, not less on humanitarian than on religious grounds, but all he answered was "that they should not have a bloody,

silly religion.”

I had heard a great deal of Indian jugglings and I at last induced a tally clerk to tell one of the fraternity to come aboard. He was not by any means at the top of his profession, being only a “common or garden” juggler, but the feats he performed on the ship’s decks without swords that ran up into the handles, mirrors, or any of the usual juggler’s paraphernalia, were weird and marvellous.

To cite but one, he asked for an ordinary canned meat tin, filled it full of water, then proceeded to pour water out of it till the deck was half awash, yet the can remained perfectly full, the water in it not diminishing a bit. I know Mr. Maskelyne pours scorn on Indian Jugglery, there may be a touch of professional jealousy in it perhaps, but certainly this man performed more mystifying feats than ever I witnessed at the Egyptian Hall.

I don’t suppose they possess any of nature’s secrets that we do not, yet their tricks are utterly unexplainable. I fancy it is the survival of the old magic, with which the magi or ancient priests of Persia used to

mystify the populace and to the knowledge and possession of which they doubtless owed much of their power and influence.

To the great delight of everyone aboard my ship, the *Khandula* loaded in Calcutta for the Australian coast. We were pleased because we were not so frequently in port, and therefore had a rest from tallying cargo day and night, moreover, it was a change from the Indian coast, of which one soon gets tired, for a sea-faring man in a foreign port, an Indian port especially where white people are so exclusive, when he goes ashore has no house open to him but a public house, and no diversion but that most dreary of all entertainments, the consumption of alcoholic liquors in stuffy hotels.

In Melbourne, an episode happened which terminated for ever my connection with the British India Company. As we were going alongside the wharf, the pilot gave the order full speed astern, but my attention being for the moment diverted I rang down to the engine room "full speed ahead." I corrected the mistake instantly, but there seemed to be some delay in reversing the engines, and the result was we

went with some little impetus into the wharf, carrying away the anchor davit and doing a few pounds' worth of damage. Of course, there was an enquiry, there always is, and "reverend grave and learned signiors" sat in solemn conclave to sift the matter to the bottom and determine what punishment should be meted out to the delinquents.

The enquiry, however, was not held on me, but on the pilot, I was but a witness, and when it was over and he had left the court without a stain on his character, he thanked me almost with tears of emotion in his eyes, for the way in which I had given my evidence.

I was puzzled at first to discover what I had done to merit such a demonstration of gratitude, when it occurred to me that the Captain having gone aft there was no one on the bridge at the time but ourselves, and a Hindustanee sucermee or quarter-master who could not speak or understand English, and his gratitude was due to the fact that I had not lied myself out of a scrape and lied him into one.

Of course, such a thing never occurred to me, but I thought that the standard of

morality must be low indeed when a man is looked upon as a sort of modern " Bayard " simply because he refrains from trying to shift the blame from his own shoulders on to those of a perfectly innocent person.

I knew, however, that my career in the British India was ruined, as a shipping company, like Napoleon the Great, never forgive a mistake, though like the same individual they may possibly condone a crime if it redounds to their advantage, so I left the service then and there, nor did I leave it with any regret as the work was most uninteresting and my fellow officers about as uninteresting as the work. I had heard that Australia was a sort of " El Dorado " and any energetic young man who liked could easily find remunerative employment, so I took a passage to Sydney, N.S.W., and looked for a berth ashore.

I didn't soar very high, I thought I would take anything I could get at first, and was sent by an employment agency up country to help in some building operations, but when I reached the scene of operations the foreman of the works, after looking me up and down merely said " What the Hell

kind of people are they sending us now," and declined to take me on, advising me at the same time, not unkindly, to look for a job in an office, for which I knew, owing to my bad handwriting and lack of commercial education, I was altogether ineligible, so I returned to town somewhat cast down. Whilst I was in Sidney took place an act of judicial ferocity unparalleled in modern times. Six youths, all under nineteen, were arrested one day for molesting a woman in the "demesne," a sort of public park or open space, in the suburbs, and a resort for the destitute and depraved.

At the trial, the woman, not from what I could gather of too moral a character either, stood up apparently unhurt in the witness box and gave evidence against them, and they were all condemned to death, four of them were actually hanged, whilst the other two had their sentences commuted to penal servitude for life and a deputation of leading citizens even waited on Lord Carrington, the Governor, to request that he would not exercise his prerogative of mercy.

The Editor of the Sydney Bulletin

said he was "ashamed to belong to a country that could sanction such horrid boy slaughter," and I'm not at all sure that he wasn't right.

It is true that the Sydney 'larrikin' (so called from an Irish policeman mispronouncing the word "larking"), is not an estimable character, only equalled for depravity and general wickedness by the San Francisco hoodlum, the New York thug, or the Paris apache, but that was justice certainly not tempered by mercy, or rather the punishment seemed to me at any rate, to be a greater crime than the offence.

We boast of our civilization, of our christianity and of our progress, and we breed a race of men and women, too, compared with whom I think the paleolithic flint chipper must have been a gentleman. I have had some experience of them all with the exception of the Paris apache, and in my opinion, they are infinitely further from the angels than the most primitive savage who ever shot his enemy with a poisoned arrow. Of course, I don't say it's their fault or that they are

to be blamed altogether, heredity, environment, unjust social conditions, and alcoholic liquors account for it to a great extent, I suppose; to anyone, at any rate, who is not too firm a believer in the Devil, the doctrine of original sin, and the total and hopeless depravity of human nature.

I was not struck at that time with the prosperity of New South Wales. The Chinese immigrants had introduced "Fan Tan," a peculiar form of gambling, which seemed to have "caught on," as had also that other Chinese vice, the practice of opium smoking.

I found many men out of work, indeed, I saw many processions and demonstrations of the unemployed, but in whatever country I have been I have always found men unemployed, or unemployable and lamenting the hardness of the times.

As I had left all pay due me when I left the *Khandulla*, I was not too well fixed financially, so I gave up the idea of looking for a shore berth and having no desire to go home, where I knew perfectly well there would be no "fatted calf" killed for me, I shipped before the mast aboard a barque

called the "Cape Clear," bound for San Francisco.

I have unfortunately forgotten the name of her Captain, but I found him the most perfect gentleman whom it has ever been my lot to serve under. To ship before the mast was no hardship for me, for I had the same diet and somewhat less work than I had when I first sailed at the age of fourteen in Killick's ships, and though not an officer, it was with a feeling of relief that I looked up at the tapering masts and spars, and watched the canvas swell in the breeze. When I went aboard the mate as is usual looked over my luggage to see if I had anything contraband in the shape of whisky, and he simply gasped when, instead of the usual demijon or square face, he came across a translation of "Plutarch's Lives," and a volume of the "Morley Library" containing Johnson's "Rasselas" and Voltaire's "Candide." He turned to the Captain and said "Well, in all my experience this is the first time I ever knew a sailor bring books aboard a ship instead of whisky."

We had a fair run to the "Golden Gate," and when we arrived I received a letter from

my brother asking me if I was alive to cable to him as he had had put into his hand by the owners in London, with whom he was acquainted, a copy of a letter from the Captain of the Khandulla to the agents in Calcutta, in which he said "You will be sorry to hear that your late third mate, Mr. Birch, committed suicide by drowning, the body was recovered from Hobson's Bay and identified at the inquest by a man named Foley." I had written to him and told him that I had shipped in Sydney in the "Cape Clear," and he had cabled the shipping officials in Sydney and asked if I had done so, and for some reason they replied "No, no one of the name of Birch shipped on that ship." I cannot understand them sending a cable to that effect, for they had only to turn up the articles to find my name, but it shows how easily people may blunder. It is true I had lived for a few days with a man named Foley, or rather boarded with his wife, who cut the brass buttons off my uniform and sewed black ones on, and apparently they identified the body by the buttons, but I have never been to Melbourne since, so I have never cleared

up the mystery, which, as Lord Dundreary says "Is one of those things that no fellah can understand."

The Cape Clear had a cargo aboard which she discharged at "Oakland," and all the crew except myself and another went ashore with the boarding house runners.

I had no intention of making the voyage to England in her, but I had a little too much sense to be tempted ashore by those plausible gentry, only after a few days to find myself bound round the Horn again "with a stocking round my neck," as the saying is. I therefore stayed aboard for a few weeks, and kept my eyes about for anything that was going. There was at that time a strike amongst the sailors in the California coast trade, an important trade in which both large and small vessels are engaged, and there happened to be lying at Oakland, a schooner tied up for want of hands.

She was engaged in the lumber, or what we should call the timber trade, and carried the red-wood from Mendicino, a little port a few hundred miles up the coast from San Francisco. The skipper came aboard and offered us the usual wages,

forty dollars a month, which seemed fair pay, and three times that which deep water ships were giving. As a still further inducement, he brought aboard a loaf of bread, soft tack as it is known at sea, as a sample of how he fed his men, knowing that that would appeal to sailors, who have to batten month after month on maggotty biscuit, as hard as flint. He only wanted two hands and one of the apprentices and myself decided to join her. The ethical side of the question didn't appeal to me, the fact that we were strike breakers or "scabs" as they were called, "sat not near my conscience," it was sufficient to me to know that I should get better pay and better food and lead a little less monotonous life. What would have appealed to me if I had known it more clearly was the fact that in joining her we were running a big risk of being killed, as life is not so safe in Western America as it is in England, and the police don't protect strike breakers. There were armed pickets patrolling the wharf, for there is no law against unpeaceful picketing there, or if there is such a law it is disregarded, but the skipper took them in nicely by

ostentatiously walking up the wharf in the evening and taking the train to Oakland, and they naturally thought that if the skipper was ashore, the schooner couldn't sail that night, and relaxed their vigilance, then we slipped across the wharf with our bags, and the mate took her out and anchored her in the bay, where the skipper joined us. We then sailed for Medecino for a cargo of lumber, which is loaded by being shot down from the cliffs on an inclined plane, kept well oiled, as it reaches the schooner we had to sieze it and stow it. It was terribly hard work and very dangerous, and though the food was good enough I soon got tired of it. As there were only six of us aboard altogether we all dined at the cabin table, and that I didn't like either, for the skipper's table manners were not the pleasantest and strangely enough, he objected to mine also, which only proves how true Shakespeare was when he makes the old shepherd in "As you like it" say, "that what are good manners in the country are bad manners at the court," and vice versa.

Myself and the apprentice were the only Englishmen aboard, the rest were

Scandinavians, with the exception of the steward who was an American. This man was interesting to a student of human nature, for he was, or had been, that type of man for which legislation in England has recently introduced the punishment of flogging. Being the steward he lived aft, was quite a gentleman aboard and looked with scorn on we foremast hands.

For seven years he had been engaged in his nefarious calling, until the woman on whom he principally depended for his subsistence died, when he was forced to more reputable courses for a living.

Yet strange to say, he had not by any means lost one atom of his self respect, and I have heard him talking to the skipper and the mate of that time, and relating his experiences as an old warrior might tell of his campaigns, and it never seemed to occur either to him or his audience that there was anything to be ashamed of in such a calling. In listening to the conversation when I was at the wheel, I used sometimes to wonder whether the guilty ever do feel remorse or whether it is only the innocent who have done nothing to deserve it.

Whilst we were lying at Saucilito discharging our cargo, the forecastle was invaded by about half a dozen ruffians, who demanded to know what we were doing aboard a schooner during a strike. It was the custom for "deep water men," who had joined the coasting ships then to plead ignorance and say they knew nothing of any strike, but we didn't advance that plea, and the leader of the gang, turning to his companions and pointing to me said, "Do you mean to say this chap didn't know what he was doing of?" I attempted to argue with them, and pointed out that I only claimed the same rights that they did, i.e., the right to work for what wages I liked. But like the Roman philosopher who told the Emperor Nero that he "couldn't argue with the master of twenty legions," I became apparently convinced by their reasonings, and after a lot of threatening and bluster, on our promising to join the Union they finally left us and went ashore.

On reaching the city, as San Francisco is called, the schooner was sold, and meeting the Captain of the Cape Clear in the street, the apprentice who had left her with me

rejoined his ship, having had quite enough of schooner sailing, and I went to a coaster's boarding house kept by a German named Classen, who shipped me in a steamer trading to Honolulu, belonging to Spreckles, the sugar king.

Hawaii has now been annexed by the United States, but it was then ruled in theory, at any rate, by a native king, whose name I forgot, but who was a direct descendant of King Kameamea, the founder of the monarchy, whose statue adorns the island.

This king, or kinglet, was surrounded by all the paraphernalia of royalty and state.

I used to watch the guard being relieved at the palace gate with the same formula and ritual that is observed at Berlin. He had a Cabinet with a Home Secretary, a President of the Board of Trade, and even a Minister of marine, his Navy consisting of one old brig. Of course he was but a puppet in the hands of "Spreckles," who ran him and the whole island for his own personal interest, indeed, a dozen millionaires possessing world-wide interests have more power now over the lives and interests

of individuals now than all the modern kings and emperors put together.

I saw the island of Kalikow and heard there was a Catholic priest there who devoted himself to the lepers, with which the island was peopled, but did not know that when he died the name of Father Damien would echo throughout the world in the way it did. The inhabitants of these Islands or Kanakas as they are called must have been a splendid race once, but now leprosy and kindred diseases, introduced by what is called civilization, have played havoc with them, there are but a small moiety of them remaining, and those have fallen from their high estate, and are but a degraded remnant. Dana, writing in 1835, speaks of them and contrasts their sobriety, faithfulness, industry, honesty and simple-mindedness with the greed, craft and duplicity of civilized peoples.

The word Kanaka really means in the native tongue "what do you say," and the origin of the word is the same as that of Kangaroo, which in the native Australian dialect has the same meaning. Cook's sailors asking the natives who they were

were answered "kanaka," and the same men pointing to the huge marsupial, and asking what it was, were answered "kangaroo," both words being euphonic and easily pronounced, stuck, and are now incorporated into our language. Hawaii, and in fact-all the South Sea Islands, supply a peculiar class of white men known as "beachcombers." They seem to be a type of man who voluntarily throw aside civilisation and society, and tempted by the climate and the easiness of making a living without work, seek the companionship of the natives, and live lives of idleness. They are infinitely lower in the moral scale than the natives with whom they consort, and the curious part of it is, that they are not as a rule cast-away or run-away sailors, but men of education and culture, who have been well brought up, and have once moved in good social circles.

I believe in the eighteenth century a school of intellectuals in Paris, with Rousseau at their head, debated the question as to the respective merits and advantages of a civilized or savage life, these gentlemen who seek the cocoanut groves and beaches of

the Australian Islands have made up their minds on the point. Personally, there is nothing in it that appeals to me, I think I would sooner be a lamp-post in London than a beach comber in Honolulu.

I stayed in the "Zealandia" for some months, for having been made quartermaster I found the berth not such a bad one, the pay being higher, the fare better and the work lighter than I had been accustomed to as mate of an English ship. When in port I used to take a single bedroom in what is known there as an apartment house, and get my meals at a restaurant, and an excellent meal one could get there, with four courses and a bottle of wine, for 25 cents, or the American equivalent for 1/- But I soon found out the truth of Bacon's aphorism, that "a crowd is not company, and faces but as a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal without love."

By love I suppose he means acquaintanceship or comradeship, for nothing is so lonely as a big city to one who knows no one in it, and I soon went back to the boarding house when ashore, it was something, at any rate, to be met with a smile of

welcome by the boarding house master, after a couple of months at sea, although I was under no illusion regarding that worthy and I knew perfectly well that he did not want me, but merely the money I should bring to the house and spend at his bar, for all sailors' boarding houses in America possess drinking bars. The money I used to spend there, though, I used to spend on other more impecunious boarders who always are pleased to see a homeward bounder. He was welcome to the money so long as he didn't insist on me swallowing his poisonous drinks.

When in San Francisco I was struck with the facility with which we could buy the masterpieces of literature. Books were sold on kiosks in the main streets, and I bought Kinglake's "Eothen," for 25 cents, the most fascinating travel book in the language, but which is seldom read in England. I also got Volney's "Ruins of Empires" at the same price. In trying to get the same book in England I found it was impossible to obtain a copy of it at any price. I don't know whether the people of San Francisco have better taste in literature

than we have, but judging by the books exposed for sale in the streets they would appear to have. Another English author very much read at that time over there was Rider Haggard, and every second girl I met seemed to be carrying a volume of that fantastic, idiotic romance "She" in her hands. I persuaded one of my shipmates to accompany me to a lecture given by General Howard on the Battle of Gettysburg, and the man at the door who took the money nearly had a fit when he saw us. Apparently two sailors attending a lecture was almost incomprehensible and altogether outside his experience for he gasped in astonishment "It's a dollar to go in," thinking, I suppose, that we were unaware of that fact, and that a knowledge of it would effectively damp our thirst for information, and when I paid the two dollars and we walked in, it was too much for him, he simply collapsed.

During the course of the evening, the lecturer told this story. He said that during the War of Secession, Lord John Russell laid a paper before Queen Victoria, requesting her signature to it.

On her asking the nature of the contents,

he said that the document contained a recognition of the "Southern Confederacy."

"But," said the Queen, "would not the recognition of the "Southern States" by England cause the slavery of the negroes to be continued?"

"Well," replied Lord Russell, "such results might possibly accrue though they are not directly aimed at."

"Then," said the Queen, "I shall not sign the paper."

At the conclusion of the story the whole audience cheered, for though England as a nation and Englishmen as individuals are not altogether loved in the United States, yet amongst the more intelligent classes, at any rate, Queen Victoria was always popular.

I wonder if the story is true, I never heard it before nor since, nor have I ever seen it in print, yet it is not altogether improbable, for until the federal victory of Gettysburg, when for the first time the Southern armies sustained a defeat and John Bull thought it advisable to hedge his sentiments, it was touch and go as to whether or not the English Government should

recognise the Southern Confederacy, although the American Ambassador clearly pointed out to the English Cabinet that such an act was tantamount to a declaration of war. Bearing these facts in mind, it is scarcely to be wondered at that for many years afterwards hostile sentiments were entertained against England, nor has the bitterness ever yet quite died down, and my impression is that a war with England would, to a majority of the American people, be a very popular war.

I got tired of Fricso, however, and resolved to go up to Victoria, B.C., where I had been before when serving the Hudson Bay Company, and with that object in view, offered my services to the skipper of a barque that was sailing in ballast to load redwood in Eureka for Port Townend.

The skipper looked at me for a moment and then said "Oh, you're a deep water man, arne't you? Don't want any deep water men," but on my assuring him that I had sailed on the coast, he engaged me, and a very comfortable ship I found her.

When we reached Port Townend we were paid off, and I took the boat across to

Victoria, much to the disgust of the boarding master who, deprived of the satisfaction of getting some of my hard-earned wages, said sarcastically "An Englishman loves to be under his own flag."

A Job that Failed—A Kindly Foreman—Vancouver Town—Types of Immigrants—Local Patriotism—An Interesting Wastrel—A Desirable Immigrant—An American Boom—San Diego—The Simple Life.

CHAPTER VI.

I felt more at home in Victoria than in the city (as San Francisco is called on the Pacific Coast) as having visited the place before as a servant in the Hudson Bay Co. I was acquainted with some of the townspeople and I cherished some hopes of getting a settled berth ashore. The man who had charge of the Hudson Bay Wharf, was called Griffiths, but he was always known by the name of Jerry, his name being, I presume, Jeremiah. He was a man very much respected and liked. I have noticed that when a man is always called by his Christian name it is a sign that he is a popular man, except in the case of baronets but they always have the prefix "Sir" in front of it. Jerry was delighted to see me, and immediately started me to work on the wharf, unloading ships cargoes, not a very exalted position, perhaps, but good enough

to start with, nor does manual labour in the colonies or in new countries generally carry with it quite the same stigma that it does in England and more settled countries.

We cant about the dignity of labour, cant, mere cant and hypocrisy; in civilised countries it is not the worker who is respected but the idler, the man who draws his income from inherited wealth, which his father or grandfather made, or his ancestors acquired somehow, looks down with contempt on the man who has to work for a living. And the curious part of it is that this scorn and contempt is not returned, and the man in fustian touches his hat and bows low before the man in broadcloth, although no advantage will accrue to him by doing so, but out of pure reverence for the owner of wealth. In Shakespeare's Henry VIII. the knight whose business it is to kill people calls the man who works "base villian and mechanical" and the prejudice is as strong now as it was in Shakespeare's time.

I was handicapped to a certain extent in my bringing up, for whilst the others rented what is called a cabin and lived

alone, buying their own provisions, I hankered after a little more civilised though a somewhat more expensive existence, and stayed at the "Angel Hotel" in Store Street, with a tariff of a dollar a day, and the resort of people in a rather higher social scale than myself.

Wages there for mechanics were then very high, there was a good deal of building going on and bricklayers were earning six dollars or twenty-five shillings a day, and I rather wished the powers that he had made me a bricklayer instead of a rope hauler, but then, I suppose, the family pride would have revolted at that.

When there were no ships lying at the "Hudson Bay wharf," I had to look elsewhere for employment, and having heard that in a big machine shop a blacksmith's striker was wanted, I applied for the job.

Probably I didn't look very much like a blacksmith's striker, for on asking the foreman of the works if he required one he looked at me dubiously and said,

"Are you a blacksmith's striker?"

To which I replied "No."

After a moment he said, "Well, come on, let's see what you can do," and led the way into the works, I following in some trepidation, for I hadn't the least idea what a blacksmith's striker was, or whether any previous experience was necessary. On getting inside he said, "Take hold of that," pointing to a huge long-handled sort of iron croquet mallet. Another man, evidently the skilled mechanic, to whom I was to act as labourer, held a sort of iron wedge at the end of a handle, and I was supposed to strike it fair and plumb.

I lifted the mallet as well as I could, and tried to hit it, but I could scarce wield the thing, let alone aim straight. After several unsuccessful shots which went more or less wide of the mark, I noticed that the man who was holding the wedge looked unhappy, that the people who had been working in our neighbourhood had all retired to a respectful distance, and that the foreman was watching me in open-mouthed astonishment.

At last he said, "For heaven's sake, drop it, you'll kill yourself and everybody else in the place directly, get out of that,"

but as I was retiring crestfallen, prepared to leave the works, he said, "Here, take hold of that bellows and blow it, see if you can make a better job of that," which I did, glad to be let down so easily.

I believe in a French circus there is always a serio-comic man, who appears to be eager and zealous to assist the others, but is incurably clumsy and is always getting in the way. He is for ever cannoning into and getting cussed by the ring master, or innocently obstructing the man about to make a jump, or in carrying out a form or piece of circus furniture he tumbles over it. I forget what he is called in the French language, but I can only compare my position to his during the three months during which I worked, or rather idled, in that shop.

I had no aptitude for the work, and if a mechanic called me to move a sheet of iron along whilst he punched holes in it, I was certain to move it too far or not far enough, with the result that the hole was made on one side or other of the place marked out for it, and I was sent away with a volley of abuse. Though eager to work

or assist I gave it up at last, and my chief employment was keeping out of sight, though sometimes I managed to blow a bellows, or rake out a dead fire and cart the cinders away in an iron barrow.

Yet the foreman kept a blind eye on me, and though I generally managed to pretend to be doing something when he was around, it is a mystery to me how I kept my job; yet when work got slack and dozens of good men were laid off, I still was kept on, though about the hardest work I did was to draw my pay at the week-end. Though the noise of clanging hammers deafened me, and the close air was what I had not been accustomed to, three dollars a day was not to be despised until something better turned up.

Whether the foreman let me remain out of sheer pity, or out of admiration for my colossal cheek in applying for the job of blacksmith's striker, I cannot say, but apparently I could have gone on drawing the shareholders' money as long as I liked, and even after I left he enquired kindly what I was doing. Though I have often, both before and since, worked without

wages, it is the only time in my life when I drew wages without working for them.

I wasn't sorry when my friend, Jerry Griffiths, sent for me, and gave me an introduction to the harbour master, who wanted a man to go round in a boat and paint the buoys, and lighthouse in the neighbourhood. a job much more to my liking. At that time, too, I had an offer from a trapper who wanted me to accompany him into the back country, trapping beavers and other fur-bearing animals to sell to the agents of the 'Hudson Bay Company,' an offer which I have often regretted not having accepted, but I thought that the job I was then engaged in might lead to something better, but I was handicapped by my lack of education. Indeed, the harbour master did call me into his office and told me to copy out some letters, evidently with a view to see if I was fit for anything better than the work I was then engaged on. But though I could write well enough to fill in a ship's log, yet my hand would not be called a commercial or a professional one, though it could be read, with application, and I could see by his face when I handed him the letters I

had copied that he was disappointed.

I painted the lighthouse just outside the town of Vancouver on the mainland, and I liked that for I boarded with the lighthouse keeper and his wife, and a touch of private life was refreshing after living so long at sailors' boarding houses and third rate hotels.

The town of Vancouver had recently been burnt down, and was then rising, phoenix like, from its ashes. It was then merely a city of board houses with a wharf at which the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's boats lay. Many of the houses were built at the water's edge, and had a platform extending some distance out into the water and one man had captured and tamed a young seal which acted as a house dog. I was much interested in watching it. It behaved for all the world like a dog, for it would swim out to sea for hours but always return and flop itself on to the platform. It would welcome its master by attempting to wag its tail or hind quarters, and if any stranger approached it would attempt to bark, or at any rate, make an articulate sound expressive of anger. I didn't know

much of Darwinism or the theory of evolution then, or I might have said it was only a dog that a few hundred thousand years or so took to the sea. Unfortunately for the theory, when the seals ancestors left terra firma and took to a marine life, the dog had not probably been domesticated so it could not very well have got its homing instincts and dog-like attributes from heredity.

It is surprising what a complete difference there is between an American and a Canadian, although they may be only a few miles apart. Port Townsend, although just across the water is a totally different town from Victoria, or Vancouver. Life and property were far safer in the latter than in the former, and altogether municipal government is purer. Of course, I don't mean to affirm that Canadian towns are free from crime or vice, but the latter is not so openly flaunted, and as for the former, though robbery doubtless takes place, and murder is occasionally committed, yet under English law retribution is more sure and justice swifter than under American. No bands of cowboys or desperadoes hold up

a Canadian town, as is so frequently the case over the border on the American side, and I have been told that the contrast is as marked in mining camps.

When I returned to Victoria and reported myself in the harbour master's office, I found that there was nothing further for me to do at present, so had to take a compulsory holiday, and I was amused whilst stopping at the "Angel" by the different types of English emigrants who came across by the newly opened C.P.R. I don't know what they expected but most of them expressed disappointment, and many who had the means were unable to overcome their home-sickness and returned to the old country, the landlord of the hotel, an old gold miner, remarking sarcastically that "some of them apparently expected that Parliament would appoint a committee to wait on them, and ask them what they would like to do."

Nevertheless, Vancouver Island is a splendid country, with vast and unexplored wealth, blessed with a climate mild and temperate very like the English climate, the country is not frozen up half the year

as is the case with Eastern Canada, and doubtless one day it will support a large population. Indeed, I hear from recently returned travellers that Victoria which was when I was there a charming, primitive, comparatively small place, where everybody more or less knew everybody else, and everybody else's business, has now developed into a large city with electric cars running even down to Esquimalt, and though I understand that the Hudson Bay Wharf and store remain, their character has changed, and I suppose Jerry Griffiths and all the other old timers with whom I used to consort are but a memory, even if they are that.

What surprised me was the fact that the natives of Victoria didn't call themselves Canadians, and affected to despise the dwellers in the Eastern part of the continent, calling them contemptuously "North American Chinamen." I remember once when rowing a couple of surveyors round the harbour, I asked them if they came from Canada, they burst out laughing and replied, "Why, we're in Canada now, are we not?" I admitted

they were in the Dominion, but maintained that they were in "British Columbia," not Canada, but they wouldn't have it so and doubtless they were right, yet a man who came from the East was always spoken of as having come from Canada.

Doubtless with the laying and opening up of the country by railways the feeling of prejudice against Eastern people has died down, yet it exists just the same in Western America, the Californians applying the term 'Eastern Yap' to anyone hailing from the New England States. But we musn't talk, our grandfathers were taught to "love God and hate the French," the fact that a man lives in a different side of the street, a mountain, or a river seems to be a sufficient cause for hating him in this world, which is dominated by man, the erect or the erected who claims to be the only reasoning animal, and to be but a trifle lower than the angels.

I had read and heard in the States a good deal about the annexation of Canada, but I found no sympathy with the idea in Victoria. Indeed, they seemed more loyal there than the people of the United Kingdom, and seemed to look askance at American

men and American methods. The Marquis of Lorne was then Governor of Canada, and he and his wife, the Princess Louise, visited Victoria when I was there, the people seemed to go fairly mad with excitement, and I thought some of them must have half ruined themselves, so lavish were they in demonstrations of loyalty which took the shape of banquets, balls, free feasts, galas and fêtes, at which no expense was spared. Whilst engaged in my duties in the harbour, I made the acquaintance of a very singular individual. He was a middle aged man, an old Eton boy and a graduate of Oxford, who lived by himself in a half-decked boat, and made a precarious living by fishing, clam digging or occasionally doing a few days' work on the wharf. The boat's cabin was filled up with shelves on which reposed the masterpieces of the Ancient World, in the original language in which they were written, as well as most of the English classics. He did not tell me his history, but he seemed quite content with his surroundings, and somewhat narrow life, and I forbore to ply him with questions but I fancy he had been an officer in the

English Army. I have come across plenty of men of education who have come down in the world and who were engaged in manual or menial occupation, but this was the only one whom I found in any way interesting. I know that they are supposed to be, and Kipling writes about "the lost legion," but all those that I have come across were merely commonplace wasters.

Victoria is the headquarters of the sealing industry, and I was offered a command of a little schooner named the "Triumph" which was going to fit out in the spring to engage in the trade, but just then I had a letter from my brother in which he suggested I should go down to San Diego, where a few years before some friends of his named Surr had lately settled. I didn't know them myself but my people did, and my brother was especially intimate with them in London, where he had worked to obtain Mrs. Surr's election on to the London School Board, and afterwards had assisted her in her rescue work.

Mr. Surr had occupied a good position in the city, where he had been an alderman, with every prospect of filling the Lord

Mayoral chair, or the Lord Mayoral robe, or whatever is the special insignia of that august office. Mrs. Surr was a most prominent figure in London educational, literary and social circles in the early eighties, where she advocated reform in the school system, and set her face against corporal punishment, her great adversary being a reactionary of a pronounced type, a certain Mr. Scrutton. In a cartoon of "Punch" of that period, she is caricatured and represented as sitting on Mr. Scrutton, so doubtless she gained her point and vanquished her opponent. I was at sea then and knew nothing about it, but she must have been famous at the time to have had the honour of being caricatured in "Punch," for, I believe, it is considered an honour to appear in the pages of that somewhat dreary journal. When I had made her acquaintance and heard her lecture, I could quite understand that she had been an acquisition as a member of the school board, and a successful propagandist and apostle of reform, for she was a most eloquent speaker and had a fascinating personality.

I believe, however, that they met with financial misfortunes in the city and in consequence decided to emigrate, choosing San Diego for their habitat, then a small and little known place, situate in California, on the Mexican border. A branch of the Southern Pacific Railway had just been extended to the place, and partly in consequence of that and by virtue of some shrewd real estate speculators, San Diego was just then passing through that peculiar phase known as a boom. An American boom at its height, resembles nothing so much as a miniature South Sea bubble, and comparatively to many people is equally disastrous.

It is generally organised and started by a few rich men, who doubtless profit by it, and is generally connected in a new country by the real or prospective laying down and opening of a railroad.

These men, who are generally in the know or possess the confidence of the railway magnates, precede the railway and buy up huge quantities of land in the neighbourhood; they then advertise largely, build an hotel, lay out innumerable town lots, and sell at

a profit.

People flock in, and at first the bidding is eager, and many of the first buyers re-sell at a profit, for the price of real estate goes up to a perfectly fictitious and artificial value. Prices reach the top at last and then rapidly decline, and many are left with real estate in their hands for which they have given an exorbitant price in the hope of re-selling again at a profit. The story of the "thriving city of Eden" in which Martin Chuzzlewit invested his money is not a bit exaggerated, for I have often come across town lots staked out on hill sides inaccessible to anyone but a goat or a surveyor. Towns were laid out all over San Diego county, and sometimes even an hotel and band stand were built, which stand now, or did when I was there, gaunt and empty, depressing and desolate.

The boom extended to agricultural property as well, at any rate, to property in the neighbourhood of San Diego.

Oranges and lemons grow beautifully in that climate, but on the land near the sea the soil is rocky, barren and dry. The last objection was overcome by building a

flume and bringing water from the mountains, some sixty miles inland where it is abundant, but the soil on the 'mèsa' near the town was so poor that when an orange tree had been planted, the hole had to be blasted out with dynamite, it was then filled with good soil and the tree planted, where it would flourish for a number of years until the soil was exhausted, then, of course, it would die.

A few acres near the town would be then planted, and the neighbouring land to the extent of thousands of acres being acquired, it would be held at an enormous price, and a prospective purchaser would be shown the orange trees flourishing, but they would omit to tell him that the holes they were apparently growing so beautifully in had had to be blasted out.

I have no doubt a boom enriches a few capitalists who were rich enough before, and it may benefit some of the original holders of the land who sold at a profit, but whilst I met many people who had lost money in the boom, I never met anyone who made any, though I'll admit I heard of many, and I met many who told me that in the boom they were offered fabulous

sums for their property and refused to sell, but I took all such stories with a grain of salt. In time, of course, prices reach a normal and natural level, but after a boom there always seems to be a reaction, as, of course, there must be.

The easiest, or at any rate, the cheapest way for me to get from Victoria to San Diego was by sea, as in that case instead of paying my passage I should get my passage and be paid for my services, a matter of no small moment to me at the time considering my financial status. Accordingly, I went up to Nanaimo, a coal port, and shipped aboard an American barque bound for San Francisco. I was paid off there of course, but found it was no easy matter to get the rest of the journey on such an economic basis.

At last, however, I got a chance to work my passage down aboard a little coasting steamer called the "San Isabel" and a week later arrived at San Diego in my quest of the Surrs. I hadn't been long ashore before I saw evidence of them, for on several fences in the town and neighbourhood appeared in huge black letters

on a white ground the legend—

“SURR’S PATENT MOTH KILLER.”

It appears they possessed a recipe for mixing a sort of preparation for killing moths, and San Diego being noted for those clothes-destroying pests, thought there would be a ready sale for it. It didn’t take on, however, and one man who tried it facetiously said, “you first had to catch the moth, then kill it, and then dip it in the moth killer.”

Mr. Surr had gone out there with three boys, aged from fifteen to nineteen, and one daughter who married Mr. Winchester, the British Consul. They owned a house in town and a ranch at “Linda Vista,” some twelve miles out. When I called on them I was charmed at my reception, it was nice to once more mix with refined, cultivated people after consorting so long with foremast hands and longshore men.

I found Mr. Surr a typical London Alderman, kindly, genial and hospitable, thoroughly enjoying life, with a keen appreciation of the good things this world can bestow, and possessed of that quality which contributes so much to the happiness

and contentment of its possessor, a boundless self-esteem. Though a Londoner born and bred, he admitted to me that he had never been so happy in his life as during the years he spent in San Diego, and I could thoroughly believe him. The only concession to his earlier habits he required was a residence in the town, he declined to live at the ranch, only visiting it occasionally. Mrs. Surr, on the contrary, lived on the farm. I believe she had always had a desire to live on a farm with her boys, to lead the simple life, and renew, as far as it was possible, the golden age ; and a halcyon life it was during the twelve years it lasted.

After having paid my respects to them, and interviewed them and Mr. Winchester, as to the prospects of settling in the country, I shipped aboard an English ship bound for Oregon to load grain for Europe, and left her there, working my passage in a steamer to Port Townsend and then crossing over to Victoria, where I expected important letters from home as I had come into a few hundred pounds.

Western American Customs—English Yokels—
Healthy San Diego—Harmless Rattlers—The Ethics
of Sport—Old Time California—The Coronado Hotel.

CHAPTER VII.

When I got back to Victoria I got the letters I expected and found myself in possession of £300, a new experience to me who had never had a larger sum than £50 before to call my own, and that only after a twelve months' voyage.

I tried to buy a schooner intending to make a sealing expedition, but found the sum insufficient to buy the schooner and fit her out for a voyage, so I resolved to return to San Diego, which at any rate was blessed with a perfect climate, and the Surrs seemed to give a fairly good account of the country, so bidding adieu to Jerry Griffiths and my other friends, whom, alas, I never saw again, I took the boat to San Francisco, and thence on to San Diego, this time, however, as a passenger, an unusual novelty for me.

I found that during my absence the boom had collapsed, everybody apparently wanted to sell town lots and ranches and no one wanted to buy.

I visited the Surrs on their ranch at Linda Vista, where they had bought a couple of hundred acres of land and built a house, but they suffered from an absence of water, that part of the country was very dry, and in the summer months had the yellow, dried-up appearance which one generally associates with the desert. In the winter, however, a certain quantity of rain fell, grapes would come to perfection and barley would grow.

They were engaged in improving the ranch, more with a vague idea of selling it than for any immediate income they derived therefrom.

There were three youths, Gordon, Howard and Vincent, and they divided the duties of the farm between them, whilst Mrs. Surr with a hired girl (as servants there were called), an old servitor who had come out with them, kept house. Certainly it seemed to be an ideal existence, at any rate it appealed to me, for they were all intelligent,

literary and cultured, and after the day's work was done would hold discussions on any subject under the sun, or even above it sometimes, moreover they were well supplied from England with the latest literature.

Social conditions there were somewhat different to what they were in England, and though, of course, money talks there as well as anywhere else, and wealth and social position are always respected, yet in a new country where there are no huge accumulations of capital, and for a time at least nobody is very rich, poverty is not looked upon as quite such a crime as it is in a more settled community, manners are simple and people are more social and kindly, and if I may say so, to a certain extent more equal. At least there is not that rigid, hard and fast class distinction in new countries that there is in more settled ones, where the feudal system has existed for some hundreds of years, and where to a certain extent it exists still. Mechanics and men who work for a wage with their hands are not termed contemptuously "the lower classes," the man in broadcloth does not actually look upon the man in fustian as altogether another

order of creation, and as a result, of course, as working men are more respected, so naturally they have more respect for themselves. The farming hands and artisans, if they should be happening to work at a house, invariably sit down to table with their employer, and their manners are everything that could be desired, except when they happen to be fresh immigrants from Europe.

An amusing instance of English caste prejudice came under my notice once. A friend of mine had married a parson's daughter and settled on a small farm near San Diego, and wishing to have some repairs done to the house brought a carpenter out from the town.

When dinnertime came, his wife laid the table for the mechanic in the kitchen. He ate his dinner and then went right back to town, remarking that he was not accustomed to working for people with whom he was not good enough to eat. This to English ears no doubt will sound very shocking, but I must admit I liked it, and when you come to reason the matter out what very dreadful is there about it? Of

course, it would not do in England; in England one must keep one's place, it is just as difficult to stoop to those that are considered beneath you, as it is to rise to those above you; a man who is indifferent to his neighbour's social means and bank account, or absence of bank account, and conscious only of their genuine worth, elects on principle to associate with them as quite an equal, earns only their contempt.

When I returned from California and took a farm in Suffolk, the lack of self-respect and the swinish craving for beer of the British farm labourer was a perfect revelation to me; but one can scarcely blame them—since the time of Henry VIII. when the common land was enclosed, thereby debarring them from access to the soil and causing them to be entirely dependent on the farmer for their bread, they have been ground down between the nether millstones of high prices and low wages, and forced to stoop low to those twin autocrats of the countryside, the parson and the squire, for, as the old Hindu Sage said, “to whomsoever the land at any time belongs, to him also belongs the fruits

thereof, white parasols and elephants mad with pride are the fruits of a great land."

The Surr boys, as they were called, used frequently to work for the neighbouring settlers, when not engaged on their own farm, generally coming home to sleep at night, the wages being a dollar a day and board. It was a fine, healthy life, and they thoroughly enjoyed it, until after about ten years when the novelty of breaking bucking horses and driving broncho cattle had somewhat worn off, they began to realise that there was no money in it, and that there was no future in front of them on the farm; they then betook themselves to town one opening an essay office, one becoming a commerical traveller, and one a lawyer, and now, I believe, they are all doing fairly well in commercial and professional life, though they are all ready to admit that had they stayed in England, and in London where they had rich and influential relations in the City, they would all probably have done better, in a financial sense at any rate, whether they would have been any happier is another question, certainly they could not possibly have spent a happier youth

than they spent on the waterless, sun-burnt ranch at Linda Vista.

San Diego has, in my opinion, the best climate in the world, whilst the air is pure and dry, and a man can perform feats of physical endurance there which would be impossible elsewhere. It is also the place to go to for anyone suffering from pulmonary disease or rheumatic complaints.

When I was in the place there were a band of people who were known as the "resurrectionists," they were a healthy enough lot, but they had come to the place in the early days and most of them were so far gone in consumption that they had to be carried ashore from the steamer (there were no railways then) whilst Mrs. Surr herself, previously a martyr to rheumatism, gave her bath chair away before she had been a week in the town. The climate is warm, but even in the summer not so hot as to be unpleasant, and only in the months of November, December and January does any rain fall. Naturally the country has during the greater part of the year, a dried-up, yellow look, very different from the fresh green of an English country-

side. Higher up in the mountains, however, more rain falls, more trees abound, and crops and fruit of all kinds can be grown without artificial irrigation. Indeed, the district is a splendid fruit growing country, lemons and oranges and grapes flourish abundantly near the coast, the water for irrigating purposes being brought down from the mountains in a wooden flume or chute. In "El Cahon" valley there are thousands of acres given up wholly to the cultivation of the vine, and fruit of all kinds can be had for practically nothing, as every little farmer sets out a vineyard for family use, as naturally as in the old country he would set out a kitchen garden. I think the Californian fruit growers are the cleverest in the world, for the "navel" orange, a large, sweet juicy orange without pips, has been evolved by their skill, and it is grown to profusion near San Diego.

The old Spanish "Padres" introduced the vine and the olive, and the olive grove that they planted at the Mission still bears in abundance, and seems to be a favourite fruit, if fruit it be, with the Western Americans, pickled olives fetching a high price

and being considered a luxury, but I think a liking for them is quite an acquired taste, for to me they appear to be harsh, bitter, pungent and unpalatable.

Forty or fifty miles inland in the mountains, a different soil and a different climate is encountered, and apples, peaches and plums are grown, together with a considerable quantity of barley, which is used there to feed horses on in preference to oats, because it grows better, I suppose, for it must, I should think, in a warm climate be very heating.

Rattlesnakes abound, but they are not nearly so dangerous as they are supposed to be, they don't affect the long grass, but prefer to lay about on rocks in the sun where they can be easily seen, moreover, they can only spring half their length and can be easily killed with a stick. Most ranches, however, keep in the house a little whisky known as "rattlesnake whisky," in case anyone gets bitten by one. Other harmless species of snakes are plentiful too, and it is curious how a horse, even a young colt, can tell the difference between them, and will shy half across the road at a rattler,

whilst treating other kinds with an indifferent contempt.

The coyote wolf exists in abundance, but does, as far as I could judge, comparatively little harm. I say it exists, or rather did exist, for the Government was trying to extirpate it when I was there, and offered five dollars for every coyote scalp that was brought in, with the result that coyotes were driven over the border from Mexico, and shot on American soil in order to comply with the conditions, whilst coyote farms sprang up where the creatures were bred for their scalps, so that after a very short time the offer of the reward was withdrawn.

Large rabbits, or jack rabbits as they are called, swarm on the "mesas" or table lands, and can be easily shot without dogs, and I have seen a man go out before breakfast at Linda Vista and shoot twelve quail at one shot. But where game is so plentiful few people seem to trouble about it, though townsmen may go out for a day's shooting sometimes, and it struck me as somewhat absurd when I returned to England to see men rig themselves up in outrageous

shooting suits, and sally out of a morning armed with expensive breechloaders and accompanied by dogs and keepers for the pleasure of shooting a wretched rabbit. But then no blood sports of any kind ever appealed to me, and it seems to me as reasonable to expect to find pleasure in a slaughter house as in a game preserve. I prefer live things to dead ones myself, at any rate, till they are well cooked and served up with sauce, and what pleasure men and women can find in killing wild or half tame creatures I never could understand.

But I suppose the taste for sport, as it is called, is a survival from a more primitive time when man was still in the hunting stage, and the taste survives, and he kills for pleasure now as he killed from necessity then. But why people should pride themselves on being sportsmen I fail utterly to understand, in doing so a man simply admits that he is nearer his semi-semian ancestors than another who fails to find pleasure in slaughter.

The Bay of San Diego was entered to a certain extent, surveyed or chartered by Cabrillo, the Spanish navigator, whose ter-

centenary we celebrated by a pageant.

The town, however, was not founded until the end of the 18th century, when those great civilisers, the Spanish Padres, who built a church and established a mission in a valley a few miles inland.

We read a great deal in Prescott of the cruelties practised by the Spaniards on the Incas of Peru and the ancient inhabitants of Mexico, and indeed the extirpation of those simple people and the destruction of the civilisation that they had evolved, is one of the most painful chapters in history, but later on, when the lust of conquest had abated and the Mother Country had sunk into decrepitude, the rule of the mission fathers, throughout California at any rate, appears to have been on the whole mild and beneficent. They seem to have taught the Indians the simple arts of agriculture, and they don't seem to have imposed too heavy a yoke upon them so long as they didn't question the dogmas they taught or presume to think for themselves, which they were not very likely to do as their thinking apparatus was none of the best; indeed, I don't think that many people in countries

that lead the van in culture or intellect suffer very much from the "malady of thought."

The mission they built still stands in the Valley, and when Dana visited it in 1835 it still supported a priest or two, though even then its glory was departed.

The olive groves the Father planted are now let to a rancher and the buildings themselves are objects of interest to Eastern visitors who would carry them away piece-meal, on account of their great antiquity, if they were allowed to do so. In common, with all the old ranch houses in the country they are built of adobe or mud; in a semi-liquid state it is mixed with straw, in the old Egyptian style, and then poured into a mould and left to harden in the sun.

In a hot climate it is a perfect building material, much better than wood, of which the modern houses are composed, as it is a non-conductor of heat and homes built of it are delightfully cool in the summer, whilst up in the mountains where the winters are more severe, it keeps out the cold.

The whole state of California must have

been a happy, romantic sort of land before the war between the United States and Mexico, when it was incorporated into the former, and opened up to American hustle and American enterprise. It was ruled, too, by a quaint race, the successors of the "conquistadores," the punctilious, dignified Spanish Hidalgo, traces of whom may still be met with in the bye-currents and back-washes of the country. The name places are all Spanish, and the Indians still all speak Spanish, though I suppose in a few years, if there are any of them left to speak at all, their native tongue will be American. A wonderful empire was ruled by his most Christian Majesty, Philip II., and what is there left of it now? Indeed, the Latin race appears to have had its day, and the future seems to belong to the Saxon, the Teuton and the Slav; but "quien sabe," to use a favourite and most expressive Spanish expression.

If not the finest hotel, at least the finest site for an hotel, exists in San Diego, it is known as Coronado Beach, and is a spit of land, almost an island, running out into the sea. The Hotel is known as the "Coronado,"

and is a magnificent structure, whilst the beach, formerly a mass of sand and shingle, has been transformed by American energy into a perfect paradise of flowering palms and semi-tropic flowers.

It is a favourable resort of tourists and with the surf breaking under the windows must be an ideal health and pleasure resort. And speaking of hotels, I was struck by the apparent absence of drinking facilities in them. None of the best hotels ever have a bar, or anything approaching one, and though drink can be bought and consumed, it is done in a furtive, half-ashamed way, at any rate, one does not see a smoking room crowded all day and half the night with people consuming alcoholic drinks as one does in an English hotel.

Although drinking to excess exists in California and saloons, as drinking houses are called, abound, they are not used by the same class of people as in England, and the frequenting of them stamps a certain stigma on a man, which is not the case in this country, where farmers and others seem to spend half every market day in them.

Indeed, a measure was proposed by feminine influence, in the town council, that all saloon keepers should be compelled to remove the wire blinds which screened the windows from the street, so that passers by could see who was drinking inside, but when it was pointed out that the only result of such a law would be that front rooms would remain empty and the drinking would be done at the back, the measure was dropped.

On the whole though I am inclined to think that the drinking of alcoholic liquors is less encouraged as an institution than it is with us.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Backwood Settlement—Sawday's Eden—Mustangs—Cowboys—A Curious Epitaph—Sanguine Americans—Back Country Types—An Unlucky Church.

There happened to have arrived in San Diego about the same time that I did, a young Englishman named Smith. John Edward Smith, to give him his full name, but he had not drifted there as I had, but had come out, overland, direct from the old country. He was the son of a rich banker of York, and was accredited to the Surrs, I made his acquaintance through their medium, and was introduced by them to another countryman named Sawday. Smith was a perfect gentleman, kind and honorable, but he was a dipsomaniac.

He seemed to be seized periodically with a craving for alcohol, which he seemed powerless to control, and though he might be a total abstainer for weeks or even months, sooner or later he seemed to be compelled to have a debauch, after which he would

sober up again, and walk in the narrow paths of sobriety for a time, such types of Englishmen are not uncommon in America and the Colonies, but unlike others I have come across, an indulgence in alcohol never seemed to debase Smith's moral attributes.

Sawday had been in the country for about twenty years, and had set up a store in the mountains at a place called "Ballena" (pronounced Vyena) so named from a whale shaped hill in the neighbourhood, "Ballena" being the old Spanish for whale. With the business of store-keeping, he combined farming and cattle raising, and had managed to acquire about a thousand acres of land, buying it cheap from the settlers in the early days before the boom. "Before the boom" was a saying in San Diego when I was there, people seemed to date time from the "boom," like the negroes of the Southern States used to say "before the war." The land he had acquired more for speculative purposes than for any actual use it was to him, though he used to raise some barley and run cattle on a certain amount of it.

He was effusive in his welcome to two Britishers, presumably with a little money

to invest, and took us up with him into the mountains, a forty mile journey by coach.

He had built his store and house about three miles from the Ballona Post Office, and round the store had grown up a blacksmith's shop, whilst the station, or as we should call it, Hotel, or stopping place for travellers or visitors, was in the immediate vicinity. Also he had attracted one or two Englishmen who had bought land from him, including a Scotchman named Wood, who held divine service on Sundays in the school house.

Altogether a tiny settlement had sprung up, which was visited by Miss Harraden, the famous authoress of "Ships that pass in the Night," surely the best title for a book that was ever hammered out of a human brain, though admittedly borrowed from Longfellow. She wrote up the gossip of the place, took some Englishmen as her characters, and wove the whole into a short story called "The Remittance Man," which I read in a magazine and immediately recognised from the local colouring and the characters, though I had no idea then that she had ever stayed there. There also for

a time lived "Smeaton Chase," the author of that interesting travel book known as "California Coast Trails." The place is now known as "Witch Creek," as distinct from Ballena, the older residents of the latter complaining that Sawday had stolen the name.

It is called "Witch Creek" from a small stream that flows in the winter months, but the origin of the prefix "Witch" is interesting, though I expect by now it is forgotten.

There is a hill in the neighbourhood, nothing that an English schoolboy would not negotiate in an afternoon bird nesting expedition, but it is rocky and covered over the top with scrub timber, as it was valueless for agricultural or pastoral purposes no one ever went to the top of it, and it was regarded by some of the older generations of the settlers with mysterious awe.

Mountains or high hills have always inspired primitive people with a feeling of superstitious terror, they have been held sacred, and have been supposed to be the abode of Gods or Demons, as witness Mount Olympus or Mount Sinai.

I remember a simple-minded old man who had lived in the shadow of the hill nearly all his life telling me that he had seen stones rolling down it, unpropelled by human agency, no very wonderful thing surely, seeing that the hill was steep and covered with loose stones and boulders, which after the heavy winter rains would naturally be loosened, and surely gravity could do the rest. It only shows on what little foundations legends and traditions may be founded which in the course of time may be embodied in sagas or sacred books.

Sawday had actually laid out a town in the place which reminded me forcibly of the "Thriving city of Eden," but he only managed to sell one town lot and that was to Smith. He did, however, sell us three hundred acres of land for twenty-four dollars an acre, nine-tenths of which was rock and which would hardly feed a goat, the whole lot would have been dear at five dollars an acre.

Of course, I don't blame Sawday for selling it to us at such a price, he had a perfect legal and I suppose a perfect moral right to, but seeing we were recommended

to him by a mutual friend I think he might have let us off a bit cheaper, but it is a mistake for Englishmen when abroad to always seek to do business with their own countrymen, many of them having left their country for their country's good. It was our own fault, of course, for not examining the land more closely and comparing prices, but Smith was about as bad a businessman as I was, only in his case it didn't matter, as he could get all the money he wanted from home.

Doubtless I should have done the same myself in the same circumstances, and that I have never done so, is not due to my possessing a supernormal amount of honesty or altruism, but simply to lack of ability and opportunity; no "suckers," as simple minded people with money to invest are called in the States, ever came my way, and if they had I shouldn't have had sense enough to swindle them.

Neither of us had any clear idea as to what we were going to do with the land now we had bought it, but I bought myself a horse and some cattle and was perfectly happy. Horses were cheap there and almost

everybody rode, and the horse always had a fascination for me. It is true my father had kept one, but it was a sleek, pompous uninteresting, semi-sacred sort of a beast, with a high priest called a coachman to wait upon it, who served as diligently as any priest of Diana ever served the goddess in the temple of Ephesus. But to have one of my own to ride and groom that was a different matter altogether. The horses are small and fleet of what is known as the "mustang type," and the saddle they carry is a huge, heavy, often ornate affair, with a large horn in front to wind the lasso round and hold the charging steer. Both cowboys and horses show great skill in handling cattle, the horse is put at full gallop, the lasso or lariat is whirled round the rider's head, and not so much thrown as dropped over the head of the quarry, a round turn or two being taken round the horn, and the beast is thrown instantly. I think the horse shows the more skill, for directly the lasso is thrown, he braces himself up for the shock, always keeping his head to the animal, for if he had turned sideways the saddle would instantly be

pulled over, with disastrous consequences to the man. Of course, the girth is not like an English girth, it is double and known as a "cince," and hauled tight by means of a purchase round the creature's body, how it does not incommode the horse is more than I could ever understand. According to Darwin, acquired characteristics are not hereditary, yet a cow pony, descended from many generations, requires little training and seems to take to the work instinctively. I doubt if it would be possible to train an English horse to it. I never essayed to use the lariat myself, but I soon became an expert horseman, and frequently was employed driving cattle. The horses are guided by pressing the rein against the neck, which seems to me to be a better way than yanking at the mouth as we do, nor do they trot when mounted as in England, but canter, or as it is called out there, "lope," which is a much easier pace for the man in the saddle, and does away with the necessity of posting or rising in the stirrups. I have seen the English way of riding caricatured in the comic illustrated papers, where equestrians and equestriennes

were represented several feet from the saddle with the legend underneath, "The higher you jump in England the better you ride." The word "lope" I thought was an abbreviation for gallop, until I came across the word the other day in East Anglia where many old words linger, and like the word "tell" used for "count" (bank cashiers are called "tellers") is an example of how words, long since obsolete in the old country or found only in the writings of Chaucer, are in daily use in America.

The cowboys carry revolvers, but they carry them more for amusement than anything else, and they become most expert shots, I have seen one shoot the head clear off a rattlesnake ten yards away.

I never carried one myself, for it is not the custom for everybody to go armed in the West as it is supposed to be, but there was one Englishman, or rather Jerseyman, out there who made a laughing stock of himself by dressing up in full cowboy rig, with a lariat and sixshooter though he rode his horse like a pair of compasses, and couldn't have thrown his lasso without falling off, or fired his pistol

without shutting his eyes ; but Englishmen who make unhallowed asses of themselves and insist in running counter to all the customs and prejudices of the country they are in, are unfortunately to be met with too frequently all over the world.

Englishmen certainly are not liked in California, indeed, I have been in most countries of the world and nowhere have I found them very popular, with the exception of course, of Switzerland and other holiday resorts where they like them for the money they spend, yet on the other hand, I never met a Dutchman or Dago, who, if he could speak the language sufficiently well, didn't try to pass himself off for an Englishman or American.

The place was peaceable enough when I was there, though sometimes a drunken Indian or cowboy might occasionally run amok, but it was difficult to get liquor, the nearest saloon being twenty miles away. The American people are fully alive to the disadvantages of the saloon evil, and do their best to keep liquor sellers out of the neighbourhood, and there not being so much law there, as there is in more settled countries, a liquor seller who set

up in a remote locality where heretofore the saloon has been unknown, may possibly find himself visited some night by masked men, and given too plainly to understand that the air just there is not healthy for men following his occupation.

In former days though it had been a tough place, for George Sawday found in a cattle corral an old pistol stock, with five nitches plainly cut in it, it being customary at one time to keep a sort of tally of men slain by a weapon by cutting nitches in the stock, and I myself came across a rough wooden sort of headstone worn by time and weather, with some rude lettering on it, which I made out after some patience to be a sort of epitaph in verse, the words were—

“ He had sand in his craw,

But was slow in the draw,

So we planted him out in the dew.”

which being interpreted means that he had courage but was not quite quick enough in drawing his weapon, so the other man got the drop on him first, with the result that he had to be buried or “planted” as it is termed.

I cannot see anything particularly to

like in Bret Hart's heroes, nor can I admire a man simply because he is always ready to kill somebody, but to do those desperadoes justice they had pluck and if they killed anybody, their victims were generally of the same type as themselves, they never, as far as I can gather, ever fastened a quarrel upon or interfered in any way with an inoffensive, peaceably inclined man.

There was one in a little town in Arizona whose frequent saying it was that "he'd sooner fight than eat," and for some years he bossed the neighbourhood, the people making him town marshall, for it was the custom to make the surest shot and most reckless fighter "town marshall," when, of course, he became a law supporting or rather law enforcing citizen. Unfortunately, there came along another man who also would sooner fight than take solid nourishment, he got the drop on the first man and became town marshall in his turn. All the time I was out there I never saw a pistol fired in anger, though I suppose if I had wanted trouble I could have found it, but I'm not built that way, and would any day sooner walk with "Sir priest, than

Sir, knight.”

What struck me as being so singular was that all the land was for sale, everybody seemed to be farming and improving their land with ultimate hope of selling it at an enormous price. The Americans are a sanguine people, hope, indeed, springs eternal in their breast, and all were certain of a returning boom, or an artificial inflation of prices in which they would be enabled to dispose of their property. Although the previous boom was confined almost exclusively to town lots and property in the neighbourhood of San Diego, and though much land was then disposed of, I am inclined to think it was chiefly paper that passed current, that is, a purchaser would pay ten or twenty per cent., and resell at an advanced price, before he had completed the purchase, in his turn merely taking a deposit in cash; but I never met anyone who had made money in the boom, nor with two exceptions did I see a ranch sold in the back country all the time I was there, and in one case I bought it myself and in the other it was bought by a water company as the possible site of a future reservoir. Most people also

were planting out fruit trees, some on quite an extensive scale, though goodness knows where they hoped to market the fruit seeing that they were forty miles from a railway station, and some thousands from the Eastern States, which was the nearest market for fresh fruit, though there were, of course, canneries in San Francisco, which however, were supplied locally.

The country was, however, a paradise for the loafer, in fact, all Mexico and that South Western American country is, as the climate is mild and equable, the conditions of life are easy, necessaries cheap, and clothing an almost negligible quantity, there is a saying there that if a man "hasn't got a coat he need not wear one."

Moreover, as there was then a considerable quantity of government land, that is to say, land that is open for settlers, or can be pre-empted or squatted upon as the term is, it is easy for a man to take it up, build a shanty and own, if not a farm, at least 160 acres of real estate. Of course, the land then left open for settlement was quite worthless for agricultural purposes, being mostly rock and scrub timber, but it

would feed a pony or a goat and that was all a man wanted who was too lazy to work it in any case, and directly a man took up a homestead, no matter how isolated or barren, he seemed to sit down and wait for an Englishman or Easterner to come and buy him out at an absurd price, the fact that nobody ever did come didn't matter, and the fact that nobody was likely to come didn't enter into his calculations.

The storekeeper, Sawday, was the principal man in the settlement, he seemed to be storekeeper, banker, adviser and solicitor to everybody in the locality, moreover as everybody seemed to be in his debt for stores, groceries and implements, he was a man possessing considerable influence.

He was, I think, fairly well connected in the old country, his brother being a famous Nonconformist preacher, succeeding Spurgeon in the London Tabernacle, and had sent out to him a Scotchman named Wood, who, I believe, had been educated or at least prepared for the ministry, for of education he had none, a more illiterate man for a preacher I never met. He had sold Mr. Wood a piece of land and he combined

farming with preaching, as is the custom in the American backwoods. He was paid no stipend but everybody gave him what they liked or what they could according to their means, as a rule not in money but in kind, and very well off he was until his ungraciousness and want of tact disgusted people, and the subscriptions stopped, and most of the preaching in consequence.

I have said he was an illiterate man, but to use Pope's line he had "just enough of learning to misquote," and he treated us to a ludicrous example of this one Sunday, when the British Consul's wife staying in the neighbourhood and attending service wishing to display his erudition before her he said, "In the beautiful words of Tennyson,"

"Oh for the touch of a *withered* hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."
a somewhat ghastly rendering of a well known couplet.

Through Sawday's brother's influence some money was subscribed in England and sent out for the purpose of building a small church for Wood to preach in.

This sum, about two hundred pounds, I think, was supplemented by local collections

and a church was erected on Sawday's derelict town site, Sawday being, of course, nothing loth to thus improve his property. But the erection of the church seemed to bring discord and dissension in the place, everybody seemed to want it put up in a different place, and seemed to want a different sort of dogma preached in it, in the end none but the English people went to it, and finally, I believe, when Mr. Wood made himself so unpopular it was shut up altogether. There is a good deal of talk now about disestablishing the Church in Wales, and people oppose the idea on the ground that religion would suffer, but there is no established church in America, yet I am sure that there is as much religion and church going as there is in England, although the land is not burdened with tithe, and the parson never appears in the guise of banditti.

I never did anything with the land I had bought beyond fencing and to a certain extent, clearing it, partly because I lacked capital, and partly because there was not more than about twenty acres out of the whole that could be cultivated, the rest being hill and rock.

Smith, my partner, soon sold his share for a trifle back to Sawday who had sold it him, and as my new partner refused to divide it or improve it, I could not very well have done anything to it even if I had desired to. It didn't matter to Smith as he got plenty of remittances from home, and he built himself a home on Sawday's town site, and having had a good commercial education, he kept Sawday's books.

Seeing there was no outlet for my energies in the Ballina, I resolved to get further back and take up homestead on a mountain called by the Spaniards Palomar, meaning "pigeon roost," why, I'm sure I don't know, for I never saw any pigeons there, but known to the more practical and less poetical American mind as Smith Mountain, after a certain Smith who first settled there and was shot in some feud or agrarian quarrel.

CHAPTER IX.

A Modern Arcadia—A Primitive School—Embarrassing Questions—First Impressions—A Joke that Failed—Starveacre Ranche—The "Itata" Affair—A Kindly Act—Special Constables—Pitcairn Island—A Lament.

Smith Mountain was a somewhat different country than the Ballina, it stood much higher, and the climate was not so equable, the winters there being short but severe. The flora too, was totally different, the trees being massive pines, and as it was much better watered the soil was more fertile. The scenery was grand and in the spring and summer it was a very paradise of wild flowers.

The society also was much more primitive, there only being about half a dozen families there, with two or three bachelors who had recently arrived. The industry was almost exclusively a rearing of cattle, though a few horses were bred chiefly for local use.

I went up there on the invitation of a certain George Cook, whose father, a refugee

I believe, from one of the Southern States had settled there some forty years before, and had brought up a big family on the mountain.

The society was simple and patriarchal in the extreme and to me charming.

There was little or no money in circulation, nor was money wanted much in the place as nature almost supplied all a man's wants, though every autumn the cattle were driven to 'Temacula' and sold, and a supply of clothes, tobacco and grocerie laid in for the coming year. Indeed, as the nearest store or shop was twenty miles away it was not so easy to spend money, and amongst the settlers a sort of system of barter had grown up, revolvers, calves, and old saddles being a sort of medium of exchange. Parsons, lawyers, policemen, magistrates, and doctors, were unknown, and yet for honesty and general morality of every kind I found that both men and women would compare most favourably with those of more settled countries, where such luxuries or necessities abound. The men married very young, and such a thing as sexual immorality was unknown, until

tourists and campers tempted by the scenery took to coming up for the summer and settlers arrived from the towns.

After I had been there some time and a few more settlers had arrived, a suggestion was made by some of the newcomers that there should be elected a justice of the peace. Indeed, I myself was proposed for that honour, but this was bitterly opposed by the old settlers, especially by the Cooks, a numerous and most intelligent family, who said that if "you create law you create law-breakers, and if you introduce punishment you introduce crime," and they told me that in former days when the mountain was even less settled than it was when I was there, one might leave gold alongside the roadway and no one would touch it.

In fact, if anarchy is an absence of law, absolute anarchy existed, but, of course, I don't say because it seemed to work well there in a small community where there was little wealth, save in land and cattle, that it would work equally well in large segregations of humanity, of various types, and of unequal possessions.

One of the oldest settlers was a man

named Dyke, probably a corruption of Vandyke, he had the reputation of having been a hard nut in his time, perhaps an undeserved reputation, for I found him good-natured and genial, though possibly in former days when there was even less pretence of law and order and human life was held cheap, he might have been rather too hasty with his pistol. Men were pastoral before they were agricultural, and the first settlers in a new country are invariably herders and raisers of sheep and cattle.

Enmity still exists between them in new, unsettled countries, and it dates from the time when men first divided themselves into two camps the "pastoral" and the "agricultural." It was in full force in ancient times, and one sees evidence of it in the Book of Genesis, for Cain, we are told, was a husbandman and his offering of the fruits of the ground did not find favour, but Abel, the herdsman, offered the first fruits of his flock and his sacrifice was acceptable. I should say that the story originated from a pastoral source or the compiler or first editor was a keeper of

cattle. The stockman, who wants huge tracts of country in which to run his stock, naturally resents the coming of the man with the plough, who fences the land in and in his turn objects to his neighbour's cattle making depredations on it.

But sparse as the population was and remote as the locality was from civilisation there was a school house and a salaried teacher, for the United States never neglects the education of the children. But there is no school rate as there is here; when the country was first surveyed a certain amount of land was set aside to bear the cost of public education and is known as school land.

In the summer time he used to teach under a tree, and I have often ridden past and seen a huge, fat man teaching one diminutive scholar, the whole of the school attendance that day.

I cut down some timber and built myself a log home, or hut, and all the neighbours came and raised the logs, a log raising bee, as it is called, is quite a ceremony there, the helpers make no charge for their services, the man to whom the home belongs

merely providing them with a dinner. The logs are raised one on top of the other, the ends notched to fit, and then the crevices filled with clay, and primitive as the material is, it makes an excellent home, the roof being composed of thin slabs of timber split from the log, called 'shingles.' At one time, most of the farmhouses in America used to be built thus, and I believe Abraham Lincoln was born in one.

I cleared some land and planted an apple orchard. Living entirely alone sometimes I didn't see a human face for a week at a time, but I had two mules and a saddle horse for company, and I must admit that I never felt lonely, or at least, not nearly as lonely as I felt in San Francisco where I knew nobody.

The mail was brought up on horseback once a week, on a Friday, and there was a general meeting that day at the Post Office. The people, however like most mountaineers, were kindly and hospitable, and anyone who happened to be around at dinner-time was welcome to share the family meal. Men on the mountain were in the majority, and bachelors were rather pitied and despised,

the inference being that if a man was unmarried it was because he could not get a woman to have him, which, as a matter of fact, was generally the case, and they would scarcely believe me when I told them that in England bachelors were looked upon as rather lucky dogs, somewhat selfish, perhaps, but otherwise were rather sought after, especially by women with marriageable daughters.

Those amongst them who had met Englishmen elsewhere asked me why I didn't drop my 'h's' like all other Englishmen they had met, and they wouldn't believe me when I told them it was only illiterate Englishmen who thus clipped their words, they explained my recognising the aspirate by the fact that I had been so long amongst them that I had got out of the habit; but I have often been asked that in America, in other places than Smith Mountain.

The cattle men seemed almost to have developed a sixth sense, for they knew by sight every cow on the mountains, and I have seen them round up a thousand and know to whom every one belonged, its exact age, and every special peculiarity

that it possessed, and when I marvelled at them being able to do so, they asked me how I knew one sail from another aboard a ship. The cattle, though half wild, are less hostile to man than they are in England, especially of a man on foot, as that is quite a novel sight to them, and they fear man more, I suppose, because they are less familiar with him, when they do come in contact with the humans they lasso them, throw them and knock them about generally. I must say it wasn't a bad life on Smith mountain, and I don't regret the two years I spent there, though I can't say I made any money, but then I shouldn't have done that wherever I had been. It was pleasant to be free from the tyranny of clothes, and also from the cant of caste, for on Smith's Mountain only personal qualities counted, and a man wasn't valued for what he had but for what he was.

During the last summer I spent there a lay preacher, I think of the Moravian sect came up camping on the mountain, and he held several services in the open air, but the word religion conveyed no idea to their minds, yet they had as keen an appreciation

of ethics, as my smug-faced tradesman who ever posed in his best clothes as a sidesman in the aisle of a suburban church in the old country.

When 'George Cook' came down with me to 'San Diego' as a witness for proving up on my pre-emption, wishing to see what his untutored but not unintelligent mind would think of a service, I took him to the Episcopal Church and I afterwards heard him describe it to his wife.

"First," he said, "a lot of people came in in night shirts and sang something, then someone else in a night shirt stood up and read something, then we all stood up and sat down by turns, and then the first man in a nightshirt got up in a sort of auctioneer's rostrum and said something for about twenty minutes, then everybody said something, then we all went out." Yet George Cook some time after met with a domestic calamity, and meeting him later in San Diego he told me he had taken religion and joined the Church, a proof that religion can be a consolation in misfortune. When, however, I asked him what Church, he said the Christian Church, which didn't leave

me much wiser.

The Indians roamed about the mountain but they were tame and harmless, they used to pick up the acorns in the autumn and get fat, though a paternal government provided them with reservations and farms which they never cultivated, and even with wagons which they used chiefly for going to "fiestas" with. The squaws ground the acorns to a sort of flour, and for countless generations they must have been doing so, for some slabs of rock, hard as granite, had been in course of time worn down some inches deep into the figure of the sitting squaw.

Yet although the art was dying amongst them, they could still weave baskets so tightly that they would hold water, a thing no civilised man could do; but most primitive people seemed to have attained a certain amount of proficiency in basket making, to have discovered the principle of the bow and arrow, and the method of propelling a canoe through the water by means of a paddle.

After a couple of years when I had proved up my pre-emption and set out some trees in order to earn some money, I left

the mountain, and sought work amongst the ranchers in the low lands.

The first man I applied to was an Englishman, an old Eton boy, who had bought a large tract of land near Warner's Ranch, and combined ranching with keeping a station or guest house for travellers. The custom there is for the farm hands to dine in the house with the family, and sleep in the barn or wherever they like, and as they carry their blanket with them, this is no great hardship in a climate like California, especially as though the work is hard and the hours long, generally from 5-30 a.m. to 7 p.m., the food supplied is excellent and the wages at the lowest a dollar a day.

I worked there for a month until the harvest was gathered in, but was not so fortunate in my next job, for the farmer I applied to put me on to ploughing, a work in which I was not very skilled, and when my employer came about 4 o'clock he asked me sourly why the furrows were not straight.

As the sky was overcast when I began work and the sun was then shining I suggested that perhaps, "the sun had come out and warped them," but he was deficient in a

sense of humour and "fired" me, as they say out there.

I went to work then for 'Bancroft,' the historian, on a large pleasure farm that he had bought in the Sweetwater Valley, about twenty miles from the coast, and where he came with his family for a couple of months in the year to recreate himself from the toils of authorship and historical research; and amused himself with putting several hundred acres out in oranges and lemons.

He was a very rich man, and like all rich men, or at least, all rich men that I have ever had any experience of, a terrible slave driver. There were about twenty of us at that time working on the ranch, and he used to sweat the life out of us. The working hours were from 5 a.m. to 7 p.m., with but one hour's break for dinner, which indeed was skimpy enough. At most ranch houses the food supplied to the hands is excellent, but this was an exception to the rule. There was a fat, repulsive looking old Irish woman who used to do the cooking and superintend the meals, and as there were an extra quantity of men on the farm at that time, I, as being one I suppose who

could be most easily spared, was told off to assist her at meal times. The food used to be passed through a sort of trap door from the kitchen to the dining room, there to be grabbed for by almost twenty hungry dagos and Dutchmen. She herself used to overlook the proceedings through a peep hole and I was amused to hear her comments.

She would keep up a sort of running soliloquy of monotonous iteration, such as "there he goes again, there he goes again, another piece of bread, another piece of bread, oh, I'm sure I shall have a row with that man, I'm sure I shall have a row with that man."

In the end I got so weak from overwork and want of food that I couldn't "hold my end up," as they say out there, that was, of course, attributed to laziness, and the boss fired me out, with the caustic remark that he "didn't keep the place as a tramp's home."

Then for once my seafaring experience stood me in good stead, for I obtained work as sack sower on a thrashing machine. It was an old-fashioned machine, the motive power being supplied by horses, a man standing on a sort of capstan and driving

four pair round. As a rule, American labour saving machinery is up-to-date but this was used for mountain work where the roads were impossible for a steam thrasher. There was a good deal of rope about it also, and I was handy to splice it when it carried away as it frequently did. The thrashing crew, about a dozen, were all native born Americans, mostly farmers' sons or small farmers themselves, they were a rough but good-hearted lot, and they treated me, I won't say as one superior, but as one different to themselves. We went all over the mountain thrashing, and though the work was hard, I rather enjoyed it. The farmers for whom we worked provided an ample table and the pay was three dollars a day, so after a couple of months I saved quite a little sum, and when the work was finished I went to San Diego and bought a boat, intending to try my luck fishing. But I never caught many fish, those I did catch seemed to be the wrong kind, and I found it a lonely eerie work sailing away alone at night, fishing outside the heads in the ocean, and I wasn't sorry when I was offered the command of what we called a naphtha

launch, or what would be called now a motor boat, engaged in picking up crawfish round the Mexican coast. A couple of men used to catch them in pots on the Islands, and we used to go and collect them, taking them to San Diego, whence they used eventually to appear on the free lunch counters in San Francisco saloons.

We used to fill the hold with them and carry them alive, and knowing the ultimate fate in store for them, I was consoled to think how little apparently creatures of lowly life seem to feel pain, for on the passage home they apparently got hungry and one would start and eat his comrade in front of him, whilst at the same time, his chum behind him would take a meal off him. Of course I can understand one hungry crustacean eating another, but I cannot understand him apparently enjoying his meal whilst another is making a meal off him.

It was whilst I was engaged in that work that the "Itata" affair happened. Chile was at war then with one of her sister republics, and the Itata, a Chilian warship, put into San Diego to refit.

According to international law, she ought not to have been allowed to leave until the cessation of hostilities, and the authorities sent the town marshall aboard to take charge of her.

But her Captain was equal to the occasion, for he invited the Pilot aboard to dinner, then overpowered the marshall, and placing a revolver to the pilot's head, ordered him to take her out to sea, which naturally he did, then slowing down off Point Loma she put both marshall and pilot ashore and steamed peacefully away.

The American Eagle then screamed and flapped its wings, there was much war talk indulged in, many fiery articles appeared in bellicose newspapers, and a United States warship was despatched from San Francisco which brought her back in triumph.

The following rather amusing verses occurred in the San Diego Herald:—

“ She sailed away that bright spring day,
With the U.S. Marshall on her,
His face turned pale to see her sail,
For he thought he was a goner.

The ship wore round, far down the sound,
In the usual ship-shape manner,
The engines stopped and the Marshall
hopped
On shore with his starry banner.

The Captain stood on his bridge of wood,
“Farewell to you, Uncle Sam,”
He cried in glee across the sea,
Whilst the Marshall muttered “Damn.”

My brother had come out to me a year or so before but he didn't care much about the country and decided to return. As he wasn't over well fixed financially, in order to get a cheap fare across the continent to New York, he took charge of a corpse as far as Chicago, the railway authorities insisting that someone must accompany a body.

Like most of the Birch's, he was very simple-minded, and on the journey some plausible stranger got all his money out of him, with the result that when he got to Chicago and delivered up his charge he was stranded, literally penniless.

He told his story to the man to whom the body was consigned, and asked him if he could get a few weeks' work in order to make enough to buy a ticket to London.

The gentleman took him to his home, entertained him and said he would put it to his club that evening. He must have done so to some effect, for the next morning he presented him with a ticket to London and a handsome sum for travelling expenses.

Of course I know, or have been told often enough, that "we are the people," and that not only "wisdom" but virtue will "die with us," but I cannot imagine a similar experience happening to a foreigner stranded in England.

Just before I left San Diego, a friend of mine who had been travelling in Mexico showed me a little stone statuette that he had picked up, it was a replica in miniature of the Egyptian sphinx. Many anthropologists connect aboriginal Mexicans with the inhabitants of ancient Egypt, and this find serves rather to confirm the theory.

Whilst I was running the naptha launch the Cabrillo Celebrations took place, and two warships coming down to take part in them, or rather to add to the attraction, my boat was employed taking visitors to and fro from the shore to the battleships.

The pageant was a great success, and attracted thousands to the town of Bay-n-climate, a facetious corruption of Bay and climate, as San Diego is facetiously called. Cabrillo, represented by a huge Portuguese fisherman, landed from a barge at the foot of Fourth Street, and marched up the town to a banquet. He looked a striking

and picturesque figure in the costume of the 16th century, and his idea of acting his part seemed to be to walk in a dignified manner fore and aft his barge, incessantly pulling his rapier up and down in its sheath.

The warships stayed in the harbour some time, and a tragic incident happened which I relate to show what may be called forgetfulness of the American character.

Some of the crew had overstayed their leave, and rather than send a marine guard ashore for them, the ship's authorities contented themselves with communicating with the chief of police, and offering a reward of five dollars a head for their capture.

The chief of police, not wishing to bother about it, swore in and armed with clubs several special constables apparently the lowest, or at any rate, the most desperate ruffians in the town. These, after having primed themselves with whisky, eager to earn five dollars by a mere man hunt, so ill used them that one poor boy died of a fractured skull.

Public feeling against the ruffians ran very high, and a howling mob surrounded the jail, whilst even the newspapers

clamoured for lynch law, and immediate vengeance on the one at least who had struck the fatal blow.

But in a few days matters calmed down, expert doctors certified that their victim had an abnormally thin skull that would be cracked almost as easily as an eggshell, and a few months afterwards the culprit was made a policeman with 100 dollars a month and free license to crack as many skulls as he liked. But the policeman in America, though he gets five pounds to an Englishman's two, is unlike his British confrere, hated and despised; hated for his brutality and despised for his venality. In San Diego there was a law against gambling, but the chief of police himself ran a faro-joint, or as we shall call it, a gambling saloon, and when some years afterwards I sailed in Harrisons in the cotton trade, when lying at New Orleans, owing to a strike of the dock labourers, negroes were employed under so called police protection, the white men swept on to the wharf armed with revolvers, and shot down every nigger they could find, the police, their ostensible protectors, seeking shelter behind cotton

bales. Undoubtedly they had been bribed by the dockers' union, and so both their avarice and cowardice prompted them to offer no resistance to the rioters.

Owing to the failure of the company in which I was employed, I lost my job, and as I had been seven years in San Diego, I resolved to take a trip home and so shipped before the mast in a grain ship bound to Queenstown for orders.

On the passage we called at 'Pitcairn Island,' which, as everybody knows, is peopled by the descendants of the "Bounty" mutineers.

They seemed a weedy lot, and when I asked them their names, though there were plenty of Adams', I failed to find any one of the name of Christian, the lieutenant of the "Bounty" and the leader of the mutineers, and they informed me that the descendants of Christian were extinct. They came aboard selling fruit, and of all things in the world, books that had been supplied them by the Church Missionary Society, that they were very willing to exchange for an old sailor's jersey or a piece of tobacco. On examining the literature I no longer

wondered that they attached but little value to them, for they were all the same, being exact duplicates of each other. I forget the title, but it was a book that had been written by some learned doctor and was an endeavour to expound the prophecies of Daniel in the light of modern history. The big horn of the great beast was the Russian or Assyrian Empire, the little horn the French Republic, and the great beast the Church of Rome, or something like that.

Evidently when the book was published it had failed to find readers and buyers, and so had been shipped off in quantities for the edification of the Pitcairn Islanders.

After an uneventful passage we hove to in Queenstown, and received our order to proceed to Leith where, of course, I left her.

Well, I have called this little book "An Old Sailor's Yarn," "the confessions of a failure" would have been an equally good title, if by failure is meant the inability to amass riches, for in the words of the song—

“ Since I left my form at School,

North and South and East and West

I have tried my level best

And done no good at all as a rule.”

and I shall never again stand on the poop of a ship with the sails glistening in the moonlight overhead, never again watch the sun rise over the pines of Palomar, or hear the Pacific swell break on Point Loma.







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